

# Working from Home Procedures

## Part A - Introduction

(1) Western Sydney University recognises the importance of flexible working arrangements in helping to attract and retain a productive workforce and support employee wellbeing whilst balancing the need to maintain a strong team-based culture on campus.

(2) As part of the University's commitment to a flexible workforce, employees have the opportunity to apply to work from home in accordance with these Procedures for full time staff on one or two days per week, possibly three days in exceptional circumstances and pro rata for part time staff.

(3) Working from home arrangements are not an automatic entitlement, but may be approved in accordance with these Procedures.

(4) Working from home arrangements that are made as part of an adjustment plan in coordination with the University's Equity, Diversity and Wellbeing, and in accordance with the University's [Disability Policy](#), are managed separately from the requirements of these Procedures.

(5) As part of the University's requirements under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#) these Procedures have been developed in consultation with Health and Safety Representatives.

(6) The University also recognises that staff in certain circumstances have a right to request a flexible working arrangements under the [Fair Work Act 2009](#). This would include staff who are carers, staff with disability or those experiencing family and domestic violence. With consideration of the inherent requirements of a role, the University will undertake all reasonable efforts to accommodate these requests. Staff should refer to the [Workplace Flexibility Policy](#) for further guidance.

## References

(7) These Procedures should be read in conjunction with the following:

- a. [Academic Staff Agreement 2022](#)
- b. [Code of Conduct](#)
- c. [Privacy Policy](#)
- d. [Professional Staff Agreement 2022](#)
- e. [Workplace Flexibility Policy](#)
- f. [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#)
- g. [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)
- h. [WSU Flexible Working Arrangements webpage](#)

## Part B - Introduction

(8) The University is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for all workers and others, including those that perform work duties from home.

(9) The [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#) (the Act) defines a workplace as:

A place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.

Any location from which University work is performed is therefore considered a “workplace” for the purposes of the Act, and its provisions will apply to any work from home arrangement. As such, the work health and safety (WHS) duties and responsibilities of both the University and its workers will apply equally to campus-based workplaces, working from home and working from other (non-campus-based) locations (collectively referred to hereafter as “working from home”).

(10) Similarly, all terms and conditions of employment remain unchanged notwithstanding any work from home arrangement, and all University policies and procedures will also continue to apply.

## Academic Staff

(11) It is recognised that, depending upon teaching, research and professional commitments, Academic staff may at times work from home or at alternative work locations. Academic staff need to be aware that their absence from campus may have an impact on their colleagues, students, and School or Research Institute initiatives and responsibilities. Whilst a formal Working from Home Agreement is not required, the arrangements must be discussed and agreed with the staff member’s supervisor to ensure:

- a. campus-based responsibilities are appropriately balanced with home/other location work arrangements;
- b. appropriate contact and availability arrangements are in place;
- c. an understanding of WHS requirements and responsibilities including an understanding of ergonomic self-assessment that must be undertaken on a working environment away from campus.

## Part C - Applying for Working from Home Agreement

(12) An employee who wishes to apply for a regular working from home arrangement should first discuss this informally with their supervisor. Following the discussion, the employee should complete the following and submit to their Supervisor for formal consideration:

- a. [Working from Home Agreement \(WfHA\) - Appendix 1](#), providing details of the proposed arrangement; and
- b. a [Working from Home - WHS and Wellbeing Checklist - Appendix 2](#), which includes a risk assessment on the duties the employee will perform at the work location.

(13) The WfHA must clearly outline the following whilst working from home:

- a. the duties to be performed;
- b. the pattern of work to be worked from home, eg every Thursday or every second Tuesday;
- c. the mechanism(s) for monitoring output;
- d. the mechanism(s) for recording hours worked and notifying any absences;
- e. supervisory arrangements; and
- f. communication arrangements.

(14) Once approved, the WfHA remains in place until it expires, noting that any approval is for a maximum of 12 months. If there is a change in circumstances that effect any of the above points, then a new WfHA is required.

## Part D - Assessing a Proposed Working from Home Agreement

(15) In determining whether to accept a proposed WfHA, the Supervisor should consider:

- a. whether working from home will be feasible and productive having regard to the nature of the employee's role, the operational requirements of the work unit, and the worker's performance, and any supervisory responsibilities;
- b. whether allowing the employee to work from home will impede the working relationships and team building within the work unit;
- c. the proportion of time to be spent at the proposed work from home location and on campus;
- d. whether the employee and the University will be able to comply with their respective WHS responsibilities;
- e. the suitability of the work from home location and facilities (see Part F); and
- f. any other relevant factors identified by the employee in their application to work from home (i.e. equipment and utilities, security - campus network, access and communication arrangements).

(16) If the employee's working from home will involve access to University resources and computer networks, the Supervisor and the employee must ensure that:

- a. appropriate security arrangements are in place; and
- b. the employee complies with the University's ITDS policies and procedures; and
- c. the online cyber security training has been successfully completed.

## Part E - Assessing a WHS Checklist

(17) The following processes must be complied with before a WfHA is approved:

- a. details of the proposed work location must be recorded in the WfHA, including the work pattern, noting requests for ad hoc working from home days are not acceptable;
- b. the Supervisor must review the completed [Working from Home - WHS and Wellbeing Checklist - Appendix 2](#);
- c. the Supervisor must determine if the proposed working from home location is suitable for the work to be carried out. If, a suitable work location is not identified, a WfHA cannot be approved; and
- d. the Supervisor must ensure the employee has completed the 4 mandatory online WHS training modules in the last 3 years.

(18) The University is not responsible for any liability on the part of a third party who is not a University employee at the work location.

## Part F - Determination

(19) Each proposed WfHA will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It should not be assumed that a work from home arrangement will be approved or that if approved, the arrangement will be ongoing.

(20) If the Supervisor is satisfied that the proposed WfHA is suitable, they must sign the WfHA and forward it to the Unit Head for their review and approval.

(21) If the Unit Head approves the proposed WfHA, they must sign the WfHA and forward it, together with all relevant attachments, to the employee, the Supervisor, and the relevant Senior HR Partner so that it may be recorded in the employee's Content Manager (TRIM) personnel file.

(22) If the Supervisor is generally supportive of the WfHA but has some concerns, the arrangement may be trialled for

up to three months, after which the viability of the arrangement will be reviewed.

(23) If a proposed WfHA is declined by either the Supervisor or the Unit Head, the employee will be advised of the reasons. It is recommended that Supervisors and Unit Heads discuss rejected applications with the Senior HR Partner prior to finalising the outcome of an application. If necessary the application may be referred to the Chief People Officer for final discussion and decision.

(24) A WfHA may be approved for a maximum period of 12 months, and must include commencement and end dates.

(25) Under no circumstances is a work from home arrangement to commence before a WfHA has been approved by the relevant Unit Head.

## **Part G - Insurance**

(26) Employees who work from home are covered by the same principles of the [Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998](#) that apply to employees working on campus.

## **Part H - Incidents and Incident Reporting**

(27) If an employee has an accident or sustains an injury whilst working from home, they must report the incident to their Supervisor and to [whs@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:whs@westernsydney.edu.au) as soon as practicable, and within 24 hours.

(28) Employees should be aware that working from home may not be appropriate for rehabilitation and return to work cases following an injury.

(29) Further information about reporting incidents and injury management can be found on the University's [Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing web page](#).

## **Part I - Monitoring Effectiveness of a WfHA**

(30) A working from home arrangement should be monitored and regularly discussed by the employee and their Supervisor to ensure it is meeting the needs of both the employee and the University. This will also assist with promptly identifying and resolving any issues that may arise from the arrangement.

(31) To this end, when entering into a WfHA, the employee and their Supervisor must agree on methods, and a schedule, for monitoring the arrangement.

## **Part J - Reviewing a WfHA**

(32) A WfHA must be reviewed:

- a. prior to its expiry;
- b. if there are changes to the working from home arrangement; or
- c. if the arrangement is not functioning as foreseen, and the issue has not been rectified through monitoring discussions under Part I.

(33) A Supervisor must assess each renewal on its merits and in accordance with these Procedures.

## **Part K - Terminating a WfHA**

(34) Either the University or an employee may terminate a WfHA by providing the other party with at least 2 weeks' written notice.

## Part L - Responsibilities after the Commencement of a WfHA

### Employees

(35) Employees who work from home must:

- a. adhere to all the University's policies and procedures;
- b. take reasonable care for their health and safety, and the safety of others;
- c. be available for online meetings, phone calls and other interactions including relevant learning and development activities as would be expected if they were in their campus office;
- d. comply with any reasonable instruction that is given by the University;
- e. report all hazards, incidents and/or injuries occurring at the work location as soon as practicable, and within 24 hours in accordance with University procedures on the [Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing web page](#);
- f. take reasonable precautions to protect University information.
- g. take reasonable care of any assets that may have been provided to them (ie laptops, phones), and take reasonable precautions necessary to secure the University's equipment;
- h. comply with the arrangements outlined in their WfHA;
- i. deliver agreed work outcomes on a consistent basis;
- j. allow University representatives, or other approved parties, to access the employee's work from home location as necessary to monitor and review their work arrangements;
- k. familiarise themselves with the WHS consultation and representation structure and the process for resolving a WHS issue, details of which can be found on the University's [Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing web page](#).
- l. follow the same processes for notifying of absences (e.g. sick leave, carer's leave) that apply to all University employees;
- m. promptly advise their Supervisor of any changes to, or affecting, the employee's working from home location; and
- n. maintain accurate and up to date records of hours worked at home within normal span of hours.

### Supervisors

(36) Supervisors of employees who apply to work from home must:

- a. assess each application for a working from home arrangement on its merits, and in accordance with these Procedures;
- b. respond to an employee's application within a reasonable timeframe;
- c. ensure the employee carries out WHS assessments as required and the employee has been consulted on decisions about the adequacy of the work environment and facilities;
- d. supervise the employee as they would if they were on campus whilst the work from home arrangement is in effect;
- e. monitor the working from home arrangement to ensure the employee is consistently delivering agreed work outcomes;
- f. review and sign-off on electronic timesheets as required;
- g. monitor and review the working from home arrangement on a regular basis, as recorded in the WfHA; and
- h. ensure that the worker has the ability to take part in team meetings, using audio/audio visual or teleconference communication.

### Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing Unit

(37) Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing will:

- a. assist Supervisors, Schools, Research Institutes and Business Units with WHS Checklist completions and queries;
- b. conduct random inspections of work from home locations as required; and
- c. monitor the number of incidents reported during work from home arrangements as part of an ongoing analysis of the percentage of face to face inspections of all formalised working from home arrangements.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	1st August 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	25th September 2024
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Director, Governance Services
<b>Approval Date</b>	1st August 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Unit Head</b>	Kirsty Dwyer Chief People Officer kirsty.dwyer@westernsydney.edu.au
<b>Author</b>	Ellen Brackenreg Executive Director, Equity, Safety and Wellbeing 47360642
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Ellen Brackenreg Executive Director, Equity, Safety and Wellbeing 47360642

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Content Manager (TRIM)"** - The University's Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).