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# Pilot Blended Working in UCC

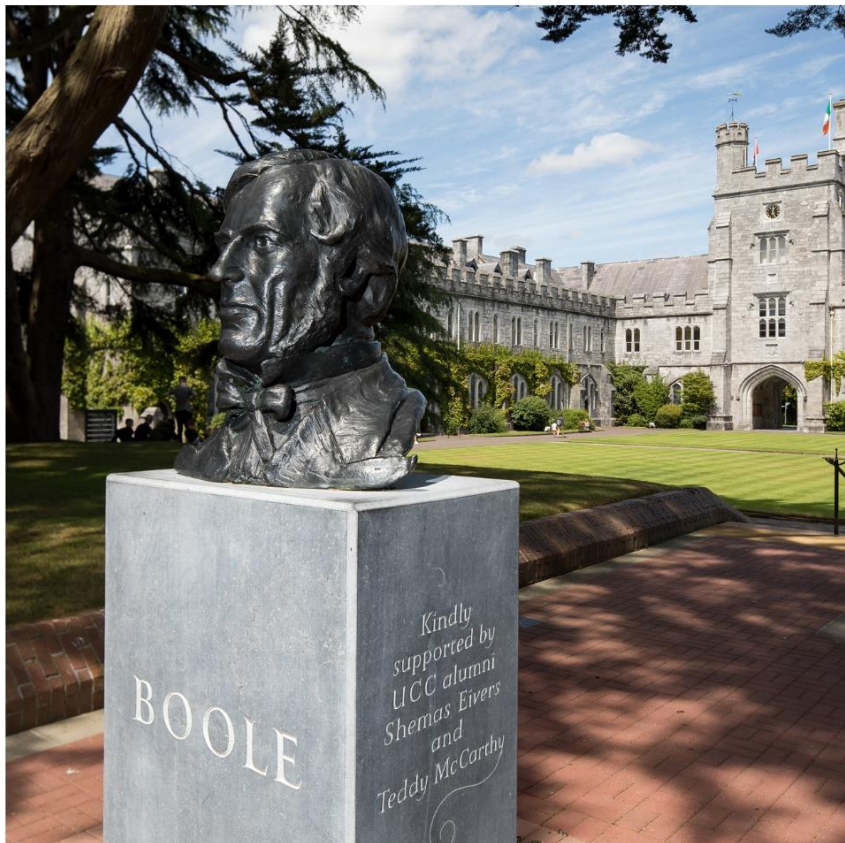
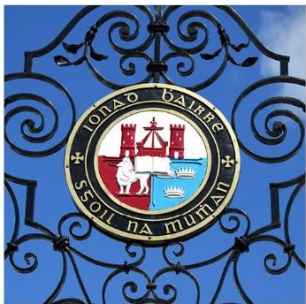
Effective 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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## UCC

University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



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## Introduction

The term blended working refers to a combination of working at the University and working remotely. There are a number of drivers for the introduction of blended working in UCC. These drivers include supporting government policies and commitments set out in the Programme for Government, and supporting the University strategy by ensuring that UCC remains an employer of choice by promoting a diverse, innovative and progressive work environment that offers flexibility and values work-life balance. The move to blended working also supports commitments in the *National Remote Working Strategy, Our Rural Future, the Climate Action Plan and the National Planning Framework*.

In addition to the Government commitments set out above, there have been substantial learnings from the temporary move to remote working for many staff resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Having considered the attendant benefits, challenges, opportunities and risks, the University must strive for a sustainable approach with an optimal balance where employees who are approved to work remotely do so on a blended basis in order to allow for delivery of services, face-to-face interaction and collaboration with colleagues and students.

Working from home has become the norm for many people since March 2020. Despite the substantial challenges involved, it is accepted that interest in remote working in the long term remains strong amongst many staff and, in line with Government policy, we are committed to learning the lessons from the pandemic to continue to ensure that the University is a great place to work. Research carried out in the public and private sectors (NUIG/DPER/Ibec) has found that, post-COVID, most employees would prefer a balance where they are on campus for some of the week and at home for the remainder, known as blended or hybrid working<sup>1</sup>.

Additionally, a UCC All Staff Survey in 2021 showed that there is a strong desire among many staff to continue to work remotely in the longer term, the majority of whom wish to do so on a blended basis.

The significant interest in more flexible forms of working, and blended working in particular, has created new expectations for employees. Organisations who do not support flexible forms of working may therefore risk increased employee turnover, reduced employee engagement and limitations on the ability to attract talent in the future. Blended working also provides other opportunities in terms of the sustainability agenda, reducing estate and facilities costs, enabling employee wellbeing, better

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<sup>1</sup> <http://whitakerinstitute.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Remote-Working-National-Survey-Phase-III-Report-final.pdf>



work-life balance, IT upskilling, higher levels of motivation, reduced absence rates and supporting equality diversity and inclusion.

However, not all work lends itself easily to remote working, for example where a worker needs to be physically present on-site to do a task/tasks, interact directly with colleagues/students, or use location-specific specialised machinery or equipment.

At the same time, we value the strong personal relationships, the teamwork, the connectivity and the creativity that are strongly associated with face-to-face communication and from working alongside our colleagues in the workplace. Ensuring the vibrancy of our beautiful campus as a thriving and lively space to work and to learn is also key to the University's identity.

In cases where remote work is suitable, a blended model with a combination of remote work and onsite work is emerging as the preference of Government and the majority of employees.

Operating in a blended way, where team members may be working from different locations, will require planning and organising if it is to be successful. Similar to most organisations, the introduction of blended working in UCC will require a significant culture shift and establishing new ways of working and associated policies and practices.

While many benefits have been derived from working fully from home during the pandemic, blended working, involving a hybrid of home and on-campus attendance, will naturally exert greater demands on staff at all levels, given that many will now need to reduce their time working from home. Consideration will be required to ensure that new arrangements can be tested and evaluated by staff and managers alike, the priority at all times being to meet the service need. This policy has been developed with a view to enabling effective implementation of blended working in University College Cork. The policy is a step towards building a more dynamic, agile and responsive University in terms of where and how we work while sustaining strong standards of performance and high levels of productivity. At the core of UCC's mission and its values is a commitment to prioritising and maximising the on-campus student experience. It is recognised that blended working will not suit all roles and there is no 'one way' to do blended working, however it is important to embrace this opportunity to introduce blended working for an initial pilot period of six months, subject to consultation and review.

## Executive Summary

This Blended Working Policy aims to facilitate relevant staff to consider flexible working arrangements with particular regard to blended working. The University is committed to flexibility with the aim of meeting both the needs of the service and the preferences of staff. As indicated previously, the Government is committed to the introduction of a statutory right to enable employees to request remote working.

The University recognises that such flexibility can promote equality of opportunity with particular regard to Athena Swan actions, improve employee motivation, performance and productivity and reduce stress. UCC wants to support its staff where possible to achieve a better work/life balance. It is also acknowledged that blended working can support improved use of our physical estate as well as attracting talent to the University.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is developing the longer-term approach to remote working in the public sector and to ensuring a consistency of approach across the sector. To this end the Department is working on a *Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service Organisations* which will assist public service organisations in developing long-term remote working policies. [It is accepted that the University's policy will require to be reviewed having regard to this Framework and/or relevant legislation in relation to a Right to Request Remote Working.] The development of the Framework envisages that, where feasible, remote working in the Civil/Public Service post pandemic, will be facilitated on a blended basis, subject to roles being deemed as suitable to be carried out remotely. It is further envisaged that this will specifically provide for changes in office space resulting from blended working. This may mean, but is not limited to working to the concept of agile, open plan accommodation (at all grades), optimising the utilisation of desks including the question of rights to designated workstations and optimising office floor space through no automatic right to single occupancy office for any grade while having due regard to the effectiveness of blended working. This may include, but is not limited to office reconfiguration/ rationalisation.

The role of the Line Manager will be key to establishing new ways of working, where feasible, and ensuring that these work in practice. In particular, Managers will be responsible for facilitating effective communication and team working within newly blended teams. Everyone will need to work together to ensure the positive potential of blended working is maximised, and any risks minimised.

## What is blended working?

**Blended working** is a form of flexible working that allows employees to split their time between attending the workplace and working remotely (typically from home but may also include a remote office) whereby an employee regularly carries out part of their duties from home rather than on the employer's premises.

Remote working may involve being an occasional agreed day or a mix of home and campus-based work each week. In general, no employee should work 100% remotely and managers should not facilitate that form of working arrangement.

However, the policy also acknowledges the need for a degree of flexibility, with the ratio for each staff member ultimately depending on:

- the organisational needs of the Unit
- the nature of the role
- what is happening within the role and Unit at any particular time, and
- the University's strategic and operational priority needs, including the space available at work locations.

Given the degree of flexibility that blended working arrangements require, the University expects all staff to be flexible. This could include staff being required to attend work in particular circumstances, for example for in-person training and for meetings and other activities that their line manager has determined are best conducted in person.

## Operating Principles

Blended working must support the operational and business needs of the University as an institution committed to the highest standards of face-to-face teaching, research and service delivery. As a benefit for employees, access to blended working will not be an automatic entitlement, nor will an employee be entitled to retain a blended working arrangement where the role and/or individual is no longer deemed suited to blended working or where they move to another role. The ability to successfully meet the needs of the University while working remotely must be the foremost consideration for all parties in determining the suitability of blended working, as this is key to the approval of any blended working arrangement. Blended working presents an opportunity to meet business needs through a new way of working; to enhance service delivery; underpin business continuity; and improve the performance of the University, all provided the role being performed is suitable to be carried out remotely and the responsibility to perform the role is fulfilled, regardless of the place of work.

In the above context the following operating principles will be applied when developing blended working arrangements:

1. Blended working will be agreed for appropriate roles, having regard to the reality that UCC will continue to have significant on-campus activities. These include, for example: student facing roles, student support roles, roles involving the provision of essential on campus services.
2. Blended working will be guided by relevant prevailing legislation, Government policy<sup>2</sup>, and revenue guidelines in relation to the location of the arrangement.<sup>3</sup>
3. Blended working is a discrete arrangement, separate to other forms of flexible working arrangements. Although it may be carried out in conjunction with a part-time or term time arrangement, normal working hours will apply.
4. The process for approving blended working arrangements will be equitable, open, consistent, and transparent. In the interest of a fair decision-making process, no employee can have automatic access to a

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<sup>2</sup> Currently Making Remote Work – the National Remote Work Strategy

<sup>3</sup> Under Irish Revenue regulations, remote workers must reside on the island of Ireland

blended working arrangement on the basis that they have previously worked remotely. It is important to acknowledge that the number of employees and/or the percentage of time employees are approved to work on a blended basis at any one time may be limited based on business needs. To ensure maximum fairness and equity to all employees on an ongoing basis, blended working will not be indefinitely guaranteed to any employee, as rotating may be required in order to support business needs, employee mobility and career development.

5. Approved blended working arrangements are agreed for an initial 6 month period, subject to consultation and review (linked to the approval conditions). Arrangements will be responsive to the changing needs of the University and may be revised in that context.
6. UCC will work with our staff to find new and innovative ways to perform duties and responsibilities remotely, sometimes adopting a blended approach.
7. Blended working is introduced as a strategic HR measure and may also be utilised as part of institutional EDI strategy to facilitate retention and advancement of priority groups in the workforce.
8. UCC will design appropriate tools and support infrastructure, including IT Systems, to facilitate and oversee blended working.
9. UCC will develop strategies to ensure blended working staff remain connected to the University's goals and objectives and this will continue to be a mutual responsibility.
10. UCC will develop appropriate learning and development programmes to support blended working team members, line managers and other parties.
11. Blended working staff will have access to the same learning and development and career opportunities as on-campus staff.
12. The Right to Disconnect, and Organisation of Working Time\Safety Health and Welfare at Work legislative obligations will apply to all staff.



## Discussing blended working with staff (See Appendix I)

UCC is committed to providing a quality on-campus service.

To ensure this is delivered in the context of blended working arrangements, it will be necessary for the leadership/management of each individual area to consider what level of blended working can be facilitated. Supported by the HR Business Manager, this process should take account of the learning from the pandemic, the operational needs of the unit and the strategic objectives of the University.

Line Managers should next talk to team members individually about their personal preferences for future working patterns.

Discuss:

- What work patterns staff members would prefer;
- The responsibility on all staff to ensure that the needs of the unit will be met, including the impact of remote working on the team;
- Whether staff can meet any policy requirements long term, such as health and safety or data security procedures, and if they have a suitable space in which to work at home;
- Whether staff members have the necessary equipment or technology to work in a continuously blended way;
- Integral to any blended working arrangements is that staff remain fully connected to the objectives of the University and continue to engage in career development

Although it may not be possible to meet all preferences or expectations, when people are able to work within their preferred style this can help them to be productive, support employee engagement and is also good for wellbeing. Line Managers should make clear with their team that personal preferences may not necessarily be met.

After gathering information on individual preferences and taking account of the needs of the unit as a whole, Line Managers should discuss arrangements with their team as a group. Discussions will include some of the following:

- What are the critical requirements to delivering a quality service?
- What worked well whilst working remotely during the pandemic – what can we learn from this?
- What would blended working mean for our team? What would need to be in place for us to work effectively in a blended way?
- What are the potential risks or challenges for our team about working in a blended way? How can we overcome them?

- How often does our team need to be in the office and how often can we work remotely? What would be an appropriate balance to ensure that we meet the needs of our stakeholders, students/colleagues?
- If we work in a blended way, how can we ensure that we are inclusive, fair and work in a healthy way?

## Establishing new ways of working

When it is agreed that blended working is possible and individual working patterns are identified, Line Managers should engage their team in establishing new ways of working. This will help to demonstrate that everyone is being treated with respect, that staff are being consulted, that the preferences of the individual are balanced with the needs of the unit, and that everyone is committed to delivering a quality service.

Consider the following recommendations:

- Are there any opportunities to do work in a different way? It is possible to work at home the same way as you do in the office aside from the location. Moreover, there may be value in rethinking processes or workflows. What work is done best where? How can work best be organised so that individuals get the most out of their remote time (focus and deep work) and office time (collaboration and relationships).
- Think about task allocation. Workload and opportunities need to be fairly distributed across your team. It's important to ensure that additional workload and responsibility does not fall onto those who spend more time in the office, as well as making sure that opportunities are not disproportionately weighted towards this group too.
- When considering work organisation, consider how technology can help. It can support effective communication and knowledge sharing, connect people and provide innovative ways to create and collaborate. Support people in using technology where necessary.

How blended working needs to work and be managed in practice will vary extensively according to the type of work being undertaken – Line Managers should be prepared to engage in ongoing conversations with their team and adapt their approach as they learn what works and what does not. Line Managers may need to try different methods and approaches to determine what works best for their particular situation. A high degree of flexibility will be required from all staff if we are to maximise the potential of blended working.

All Line Managers should be conscious that in formalising any blended arrangements, full regard must be shown to the inter dependency between the various functions and schools/departments across the university.

It is further envisaged that blended working will specifically provide for changes in office space. This may mean, but is not limited to, working to the concept of agile, open plan accommodation (at all grades), optimising the utilisation of desks including the question of rights to designated workstations and optimising office floor space through no automatic right to single occupancy office for any grade while having due regard to the effectiveness of blended working. This may include, but is not limited to, office reconfiguration/rationalisation.

If you opt for blended working, you may not retain a dedicated desk/office in the University. You may have to engage in desk/office sharing.

## Principles that will apply to a right to request remote work

**Time and attendance** - It is envisaged that all employees granted blended working will be required to maintain records of their time and attendance as required by the Organisation of Working Time Act. Staff must ensure that they are available during agreed core working hours. While the concept of remote working is to afford flexibility, the number of hours worked stay the same and any flexibility regarding work pattern within that, must be agreed with your line manager. There may be certain dates or times when a staff member is required to attend for agreed time/events/meetings/training. Staff must also ensure that they can work free from disruption and have adequate care arrangements in place for dependants that may be at home during working hours.

**Location of remote work** – The policy provides for a right for employees to request remote working at a suitable nominated location. As a public sector employee, and in line with DPER current guidelines, staff must be resident in the Irish jurisdiction to avail of blended working and must be available to attend in person when required.

**Health & Safety** – In advance of being approved for blended working, employees must complete a self-assessment form identifying any potential risk and confirming that their workstation meets the relevant health and safety requirements. The University reserves the right to audit the workstation to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.

**Equal access to training and career development** - It is intended that employees working remotely will have the same access to training and career development and be subject to the same policies as comparable colleagues working in the employer's premises.

**Equal access to conditions of employment** - It is intended that employees working remotely will have the same access to conditions of employment as comparable colleagues working on University premises.

**Confidentiality and Data Protection** - The University's data protection and confidentiality rules continue to apply and employees working from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information (manual and electronic) secure at all times. Employees must continue to comply with the IT Acceptable Use Policy and other IT/University policies. Staff should be aware that their obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 are not confined to the employer's work premises. They also apply when working from home and working remotely in any location. The University should be alive to the risks associated with employees processing personal data while carrying out their duties remotely.

UCC employees must ensure the arrangements for remote working do not conflict with the UCC's data protection policies and take any additional measures necessary to ensure the security of confidential, personal and sensitive data during remote working. UCC employees must be mindful of the principles of the GDPR:

- Lawfulness, fairness and transparency;
- Purpose limitation;
- Data minimisation;
- Accuracy;
- Storage limitation;
- Integrity and confidentiality; and
- Accountability.

UCC employees who are processing personal data must have a legal basis to do so - Article 6 and Article 9 (special category data) of the GDPR refers. Helpful resources include the UCC website and the Data Protection Commission website - in particular their guidance on Protecting Personal Data when Working Remotely.

<https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/protecting-personal-data-when-working-remotely> .

**Cybersecurity-** Maintain a high standard of cyber hygiene and comply/cooperate with best practice for maintaining cybersecurity remotely in line with guidance provided by the National Cyber Security Centre.

**Mental Health-** The University is committed to ensuring that sufficient wellbeing supports are in place for employees working remotely

**Equality Issues-** The University is committed to implementing the policy in a fair and equal manner towards all employees, having regard to the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015.



## Eligibility Criteria

Any UCC staff member working in a suitable role has a right to request blended working. However, as a benefit for staff, access to blended working will not be an automatic entitlement, regardless of any previous working arrangement for the employee, including during Covid 19.

There are certain roles which are campus based and by definition simply are not compatible with and do not lend themselves to home working. For example, this includes roles in which employees undertake manual tasks or who need to be physically present onsite to do their work and/or roles which rely upon access to onsite facilities and equipment. Other roles which require significant face to face contact may also be considered unsuitable. Where staff are responsible for teaching, any blended working request will obviously need to be considered in the context of the requirements and the nature of the teaching timetable. The Head/Line Manager may wish to seek advice from their HR Manager when assessing the suitability of remote working and to assist consistency in decision-making in this regard.

The following criteria in respect of the needs of the University and role suitability must be considered and satisfied for any blended working arrangement to be approved.

### ➤ **The Needs of the University**

Supporting the business needs of the University as a globally ranked academic institution, in order to deliver efficient, high-quality services is of paramount importance. Productivity standards and performance levels cannot be compromised in order to facilitate blended working in the long term. The University must strike the balance between striving to be more flexible, efficient and resilient by reimagining roles and facilitating blended working where practical, while enabling onsite interaction, collaboration and support as required in order to sustain high levels of productivity and performance at an individual, team and organisational level.

Employees and management need to be realistic and to recognise that blended working options will not be appropriate for all roles. Where a blended working application is made, in deciding on same, the Head will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- maximisation of the student campus experience and prioritisation of face-to-face teaching;
- needs of the unit/service both generally and specifically on days in question and impact on service delivery;

- nature of work for which employed and the suitability or appropriateness of the role for blended working having regard to the detail of the tasks specific to the role;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet student/customer demands, deliver positive student experience or research excellence;
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on the individual/other staff/team performance and collaboration/inability to reorganise work;
- the need for, and effect on, supervision, service quality, productivity and outcomes;
- the existing structure of the department;
- the availability of staff resources;
- the workload of the role;
- health and safety issues;
- data protection issues;
- cyber security issues;
- suitability of home/location/internet connectivity for remote working;
- ability to attend the University at short notice, if required;
- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement.

### ➤ **Role Suitability**

While the University is committed to facilitating blended working where practical, not all roles will be suitable for blended working. Consideration of role suitability will include:

- requirements to access particular technologies/equipment/data accessible only on-site;
- requirements for student/staff/public facing service delivery at the University;
- performance of tasks that have a high degree of manual work;
- performance of support tasks that must be provided on-site;
- performance of tasks that are more efficiently carried out on-site.

Requests for a blended working arrangement as a reasonable accommodation, under relevant legislation, should be dealt with under the normal process for seeking reasonable accommodation and not through the Blended Working Policy.

## **Submitting a blended working request (See Appendix II)**

All requests must be made via the online Blended Working Application form. Any request made must include:

- any effect the employee thinks the requested change may have on the service;
- how, in their view, any such effect could be dealt with;
- the date from when the employee would like the proposed change to come into effect;
- the date of the application.

## **Responding to a blended working request**

Upon receiving the application request for blended working the Head/Line Manager will usually seek to arrange a meeting with the staff member to:

- discuss the request
- find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- how it could be of benefit to both the staff member and service

The Head will consider and take the decision in relation to the proposed blended working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits and adverse effects to the employee and to the organisation in implementing the proposed changes. The Head/Line Manager may wish to seek advice from their HR Manager.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another staff member to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

- The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The Head may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the blended working arrangement for a trial period.
- The staff member will be informed in writing of the Head's decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 28 days after receipt of the request or 14 days after the meeting. This time limit

may be extended with the agreement of both the staff member and the Head.

- The employee will be sent a Blended Working Decision Form. If the request is agreed, the form will include details of the new arrangements. If the application is refused (or deferred) the grounds for doing will be specified in the Decision Form having regard to the eligibility criteria\needs of the University, as outlined above.

## **Right to appeal decision**

As specified for in the Government's *National Remote Work Strategy* a remote work policy must provide for the establishment of a review or appeal process. Under this policy the employee has the right to appeal the decision, if their request is refused or is only agreed in part, to the decision maker's manager.

The employee may lodge an appeal within [14 days] of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the staff member and the person hearing the appeal.

## **Trialling new working arrangements**

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the blended working arrangement is practicable for the staff member and the University, a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged, sufficient time having regard to the circumstances will be allowed before taking any decision on the viability of a new arrangement.

Where a trial period has been arranged the staff member will be provided with written confirmation by the Head of their new working pattern including the start and end dates of the trial period (although the University may reduce or lengthen the trial period where necessary with the agreement of the employee). The University will reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement.

## **Review**

The provisions of this policy will be reviewed after 6 months. A blended working arrangement may be reviewed from time to time at the instigation of either the Head or the employee if evidence suggests that it is no longer effective. When proposing any changes, the same procedures outlined above must be followed.

## Legislation relating to this policy

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015

Irish Data Protection Acts, 1988-2018

General Data Protection Regulation, 2018

Freedom of Information Act, 2014

Organisation of Working Time Act, 1977

Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 /relevant regulations

Terms of Employment (Information) Acts, 1994 to 2014

## References

The current *Programme for Government*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e05d-programme-for-government-our-shared-future/> published in June 2020 has committed that “public sector employers, colleges and other bodies’ move to 20 percent home and remote working in 2021”.

In January 2021, the Government published ‘*Making Remote Work Ireland’s National Remote Work Strategy* –

<https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Making-Remote-Work.pdf> with the objective of ensuring that remote working is a permanent feature in the Irish workplace in a way that maximises economic social and environmental benefits.

In February 2021, the current public service agreement “*Building Momentum*” <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e9d23-building-momentum-a-new-public-service-agreement-2021-2022/> was ratified which committed the parties to “accommodating the potential of remote working where appropriate in line with the Programme for Government” and to establish the public service “as a driver of best practice in this area.

In March 2021, the Government launched *Our Rural Future –Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4c236-our-rural-future-vision-and-policy-context/> which commits to the development of public sector hubs in regional towns to enable public servants to work from their own locality and reiterates the commitment to 20% remote working in the public sector this year, with further increases over the next 5 years.

In April 2021, the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) introduced a [Code of Practice on the right to disconnect](#) . One of the drivers for the Code was “to assist employers and employees in navigating an increasingly



digital and changed working landscape which often involves remote and flexible working”.

In July 2021, the Government published a policy statement on Blended Working in the Civil Service <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dc88a-blended-working-in-the-civil-service/>

In January, 2022, the Government published a Draft Scheme of the Right to Request Remote Working Bill, 2022.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/64d83-right-to-request-remote-work-bill-2021/>

## Appendix I

### Assessing roles for blended working

As we look to a future of work beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, the University acknowledges a growing desire amongst employees to work in a blended manner. This will involve assessing roles to gauge how much remote working can continue into the future.

It will be appreciated that not all work lends itself easily to remote working, for example roles in which employees undertake manual tasks or jobs that require employees to be physically present on-site to do their work, interact with others, or use location-specific machinery or equipment. Therefore, even in cases where line managers want to facilitate staff members and be as flexible as possible, it will not always be an appropriate or suitable option. In other cases, a combination of remote work and onsite work may be appropriate and suitable.

Most jobs are typically comprised of several types of activity which influence the type of flexibility that can be undertaken.

The balance of these activities can help you to consider whether a role can be blended and how much remote work can be undertaken:

- Activities that are undertaken with other people, at the same time and at the same place. Such roles may not permit blended working, or only a minority of time spent working remotely.
- Activities that are undertaken with other people at the same time, but this can be in person or remote. Such roles may be able to undertake some blended or remote working.

Activities that are largely independent and can be undertaken anywhere or at any time. These roles may permit a significant amount of remote working.

Can any of the employee's role be undertaken away from the office/work location?

What percentage of the role can be undertaken away from the office/work location?

Do any other stakeholders, including colleagues, need to be consulted?

**Undertake a role review exercise.** Consider how much time the employee spends in activities that can only be undertaken at a particular location or at a particular time, how much work the employee undertakes independently that does not require collaboration, and how much work has to be undertaken in collaboration with others (and whether this has to be done in person or can be done online).

Questions to consider when 'unsure' if a role can be done away from the office/work location (or the amount is not clear):

- What type of the role activity is most effective where?
- What is the balance of activity within the role?
- How much of the work must be undertaken face to face with other people?
- Which work location best supports productivity and why?
- What are the employee's personal preferences about how they work?
- How is the work currently structured, and can it be structured in a different way to support remote working?
- How much supervision or support does the role require?

## **Appendix II**

### **Process for Heads/Line Managers**

Prior to undertaking this process, it is recommended that each Head/Line Manager, together with their HR Business Manager, review the needs of the unit or team and give consideration to what level of blended working will be possible in line with the principles of this policy.

#### **Step 1**

Line Managers are required to talk to individual team members about their personal preferences for future working patterns referencing the Pilot Blended Working in UCC 2022-Policy, particularly the needs of the University in that regard.

#### **Step 2**

After gathering information on individual preferences, Line Managers should consider talking with their team as a group to discuss matters such as the level of cover/in office working required to deliver a quality service and ensure fairness of workload amongst colleagues.

#### **Step 3**

Assess roles for blended working and when/if it is agreed that blended working is possible and individual working patterns are identified, line managers should engage their team in establishing new ways of working, if required.

#### **Step 4**

Application is received by the Head from staff member via an online application form.

#### **Step 5**

Line Manager meets with individual staff member regarding the application for blended working.

#### **Step 6**

In advance of any approval for blended working, a risk assessment must be submitted by the employee to the Line Manager and any requirements to enable remote working discussed/sourced.

#### **Step 7**

Head approves in full, in part, refuses or proposes modifications to the application. The request may be granted on a temporary basis or the staff member may be asked to trial the arrangement. The employee will be informed of the Head's agreement to the request via a blended working decision form not later than [28 days] of the University receiving the request.

#### **Step 8**

A blended working arrangement may be reviewed from time to time at the instigation of either the Line Manager or the staff member.

## **Process for Making an Application for Blended Working in UCC**

### **Step 1**

Review the Pilot Blended Working in UCC 2022 Policy taking into account the needs of the University.

### **Step 2**

Submit a blended working request via online form following individual/team discussions with Line Manager.

### **Step 3**

Attend scheduled meeting with Line Manager to discuss blended working application.

### **Step 4**

In advance of any approval for blended working, a risk assessment must be submitted by the employee to Line Manager and any requirements to enable remote working discussed/sourced.

### **Step 5**

Application will be granted in full, in part, refused or modified and staff member will be notified not later than 28 days from receipt of application. The request may be granted on a temporary basis or the staff member may be asked to trial the arrangement

### **Step 6**

In the event that the request is refused or only agreed in part, staff will have the right to appeal the decision to the decision maker's manager within 14 days.

### **Step 7**

Where a blended working arrangement is agreed, confirmation of same will be issued via a blended working decision form to the staff member within 28 days of the change.

### **Step 8**

A blended working arrangement may be reviewed from time to time at the instigation of either the line manager or the staff member.