Purpose

To outline the policy for staff seeking to enter into a fixed-term working from home arrangement. The policy and associated procedure assists staff and their managers to clearly set in place a working from home arrangement as part of a staff member’s overall negotiated flexible working arrangement.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff of the University (General and Academic staff, TAFE teachers) seeking to enter into a regular arrangement to carry out part of his/her duties from home, for a specified period of time.

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreed Working from Home Hours:</th>
<th>Days, times and/or hours of work agreed between the Manager and the Staff Member for the Staff Member to carry out his/her duties at the Home-Office.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Office:</td>
<td>The area designated by the Staff Member within the Staff Member’s home as the worksite in which the Staff Member will carry out the home-based work as per the Working from Home Arrangement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours of Work</td>
<td>Ordinary hours to be worked by a Staff Member, as detailed in relevant Awards or Agreements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager:</td>
<td>The Head of School, Head of Department, Director or Manager who has the responsibility for the management of the Staff Member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualified Representative:</td>
<td>An independent person appointed by the University to undertake Site Inspections of the Home Office on request.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Agreed Working from Home Hours:

Days, times and/or hours of work agreed between the Manager and the Staff Member for the Staff Member to carry out his/her duties at the Home-Office.

The Qualified Representative will be sourced from preferred suppliers and will be on the list of Approved Occupational Rehabilitation Service Providers recognised by WorkSafe Victoria.

Site Inspection:

An inspection of the Home Office carried out by a Qualified Representative appointed by the University to ensure the Home Office meets OHS standards.

Any costs related to site inspections is to be negotiated between the School or Portfolio and the Staff Member requesting the Working from Home Arrangement.

Staff Member:

Any person who is an employee of the University including, for the purpose of this Procedure, contracted staff, seeking to enter into a Working from Home Arrangement.

Working From Home Arrangement:

An approved arrangement for a Staff Member to regularly carry out defined duties from his/her Home-Office during the Agreed Working from Home Hours, on an ongoing basis or for a specified period of time, the terms of which are set out in a Working from Home Agreement entered into between the Staff Member and the University.

Working from Home Arrangement Self Assessment Checklist: Occupational Health and Safety and Other Considerations:

A checklist completed by the Staff Member confirming that their Home Office meets occupational health and safety requirements and identifies any possible risks associated with the Home Office.

This document must be satisfactorily completed before the Home Office is considered suitable for the proposed Working from Home Agreement.

Policy Statement

The University is committed to policies and procedures which support flexibility in the workplace.

The University recognises that there are circumstances where allowing a staff member to regularly work from home may assist the staff member to balance his/her work, health issues and/or family or other responsibilities.

However, the University also recognises that it is not always appropriate for a staff member to carry out part or all of his/her duties from home and there are reasons why approval of a Working from Home Arrangement may be refused or limited.

Preliminary Considerations

In all cases where a Staff Member is seeking to enter into a Working from Home Arrangement, the Staff Member and his/her Manager must consult and take into account the following:

Eligibility

The Manager must examine the request for a Working from Home Arrangement in the context of the:

1. University’s Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy and the broader responsibility to consider flexible working arrangements (where the request is related to family responsibilities) under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995;
2. suitability of the Staff Member’s job;
3. reasons for the Staff Member wanting to work from home;
4. ability of the Staff Member to complete the work within the agreed Hours of Work detailed in relevant Awards or Agreements;
5. delegation of work from / to the Staff Member;
6. effect on co-workers and customers of the University;
7. proposed methods for monitoring and assessing the Staff Member’s work;
8. days and hours of the proposed Working from Home Arrangement in the context of the Staff Member’s overall working days and hours and in accordance with relevant Awards and Agreements;
9. Staff Member having a suitable Home-Office; and
10. equipment and resources necessary for the Staff Member to effectively work from home.

Suitability

The Manager should consider the general nature and requirements of the Staff Member’s work duties and the Staff Member’s ability to work autonomously. A Staff Member who requires close supervision or close interaction with other staff may not be suitable for the independent nature of a Working from Home Arrangement.

Duties considered suitable for a Working from Home Arrangement may include; research, teaching preparation, computer design and programming, policy writing, projects, report writing and planning. Such duties would usually be definable, office-based tasks involving minimal face-to-face contact with other staff, students or customers of the University. Such duties should be ones which are unlikely to cause a risk to the Staff Member’s health or safety. Duties involving manual handling are unlikely to be suitable for a Working From Home Arrangement.

Any Working from Home Arrangement must be able to be discharged during the agreed Hours of Work, as detailed in the relevant Awards or Agreements.

Staff Members and Managers may seek advice from Human Resources or Equity and Equal Opportunity regarding the suitability of the proposed Working from Home Arrangement.

Carer Responsibilities and Medical Conditions

A Working from Home Arrangement may assist the Staff Member to discharge carer responsibilities or to manage a long term health issue. However, the Staff Member must be able to carry out his/her work at home as efficiently and effectively as an equivalent staff member working on University premises.

A Staff Members seeking a Working from Home Arrangement to assist with the management of a long term health issue must provide written advice from a recognised medical practitioner in the form of a letter or detailed medical certificate.

WorkCover

A Staff Member who is Working From Home under an approved Working from Home Arrangement will be covered by the University’s WorkCover insurance if performing University work in accordance with the Working from Home Arrangement in his/her Home-Office.

Approval of a Working from Home Arrangement

Each request for a Working from Home Arrangement must be considered on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Staff Member’s Manager and in accordance with relevant Awards and Agreements.
Managers may seek advice from Human Resources or Equity and Equal Opportunity at any step of the process in approving, modifying or denying a proposed Working from Home Arrangement.

Before the University will approve a Working from Home Arrangement, the Staff Member and his/her Manager must follow the procedure for approval as outlined in the Working from Home Procedure. As part of the approval process, the Staff Member must enter into a Working from Home Agreement with the University. The terms and conditions of the Working from Home Agreement are as set out in the Agreement and as outlined in Terms and Conditions of a Working from Home Arrangement of the Working from Home Procedure.

Responsibility

- The Director, Human Resources has responsibility for the review and implementation of this procedure.
- Managers have responsibility for considering all home-based work requests in accordance with this Policy and for approving or denying a Working from Home Arrangement and a proposed Home-Based Work Agreement (including Schedules 1 and 2) in the first instance.
- The Manager, Risk, Health and Safety (or representative) has responsibility for providing advice, when requested, to the Staff Member or the Staff Members Manager, on the completed Working from Home Arrangement Self Assessment Checklist: Occupational Health and Safety and Other Considerations (Schedule 2 of the Working from Home Agreement) and providing a referral to a list of external experts who could conduct Site Inspections.
- Heads of Schools/Sections/Directorates have ultimate responsibility for approving or denying Working from Home Agreements (including Schedules 1 and 2).

Legislative Context


Associated Documents

- Working From Home Procedure.
- Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy.
- Children in University Activities Policy.
- Children in University Activities Procedure.
- Flexible Work Arrangements Toolkit.
- Staff Grievance Policy.
- Staff Grievance Procedure.
- University Collective Agreement, Academic and General Staff Employees.
- Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Employer Certified Agreement (MBA)2009.

Implementation

The Working From Home Policy will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. an Announcement Notice under ‘FedNews’ on the ‘FedUni’ website and through the University Policy - ‘Recently Approved Documents’ webpage to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. inclusion on the University's online Policy Library; and
3. notification forwarded by the Director, Human Resources to all Heads of Schools/Sections/Directorates.