## Introduction

These **Blended workforce principles** have been established with the objective of embedding contemporary and flexible working practices, beyond the immediate transition to campus, and in accordance with our Workforce Planning Guidelines.

The pandemic has given rise to key workplace insights that can be harnessed to redesign current models of working.

These principles have been developed through the lens of ongoing, long-term application, however, will be piloted over the next six months as we adapt to returning larger workforce numbers to our campuses. Upon review, they will inform a revision of the *Working from Home Policy and Procedure* and will be supported by the future development of a set of workplace principles.

The University is committed to enabling a safe work environment, and while University policies and procedures apply regardless of work location, in applying these principles staff will need to be mindful of the requirement to take reasonable care of their own health, safety and wellbeing and the safety of others, understand and follow good ergonomic practices and report any safety issues.

These principles apply to academic and general/professional staff employed under the *Federation University Australia Union Enterprise Agreement 2019–2021* (the EA) and TAFE teaching staff employed under the *Federation University Australia TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement 2019* (the TAFE Agreement).

## Objectives

Federation University endeavours to provide a flexible, supportive and diverse working environment which encourages staff to live a balanced lifestyle combining work, family and community responsibilities, whilst at the same time acknowledging the need to create vibrant campus experiences for students and staff alike.

Our central focus is our students and we must endeavour to ensure our policies, processes and culture is student-centric. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff, to ensure students receive a positive and fulfilling experience in all interactions with the University.

In addition to a student-centric culture, we recognise that a positive workplace and team culture supports the work/life integration of our staff. This drives positive engagement, innovation, high-performance, talent attraction and retention outcomes. Work/life integration encourages diversity and inclusion of staff, recognising needs at different stages of their careers, from family responsibilities to cultural and community commitments. We understand that productivity and staff satisfaction can be enhanced, and wellness improved, by considering work/life integration in ways that may be different to the traditional modes of work.

As an employer, the University strives to balance the needs of individual staff members and the University to enable work and life requirements to be addressed appropriately. The overall aim is to optimise the contribution of staff in the achievement of both personal and professional outcomes in an environment that is cooperative, supportive and efficient.

The University also recognises that factors contributing to work/life integration may change over time. To support our staff, the University is providing a level of autonomy and flexibility to accommodate various priorities.

These may include:

* family responsibilities, such as parenting and elder care;
* vocational education for personal and professional development;
* cultural responsibilities or commitments;
* volunteering or community engagement activities outside work;
* managing wellbeing for self or a family member; and
* reducing working hours.

## Workplace flexibility

Federation University is renowned for its collaborative and connected community, which is a positive contributor to both the staff and student experience.

Work location flexibility is one of a suite of flexible work options available to staff as part of the University’s commitment to flexible working practices.

Flexible work arrangements may include working from home, a blended approach, or a casual flexibility arrangement; for a temporary, or set period.

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| **Flexible working arrangements**1. [Blended work](#blended)2. [Change to hours of work](#change) 3. [Annualised hours (academic and general staff only)](#annualised)4. [Purchased leave (academic and general staff only)](#purchased)**Requests for flexibility*** [Staff-initiated work from home requests](#purchased)
* [Employer-initiated work from home requests](#employerinitiated)
 |  | [**Position suitability**](#positionsuitability)[**Technology, facilities and equipment**](#facilities)[**Space management provisions**](#spacemanagement)[**Approval process and renewals**](#approvalprocess) |

## Flexible working arrangements

There are a variety of flexible working arrangements available to staff. All arrangements must be applied for as per the principles, approved, and formalised in a letter of agreement if not covered by a contract of employment.

Any request for flexible working arrangements must be balanced with the responsibilities of the role, the needs of our students, possible impact to business operational requirements, and impact on other staff and immediate team.

Any proposed flexible working arrangements must not commence prior to 11 January 2021 and, in accordance with this pilot, will conclude no later than 9 July 2021. A review must take place a minimum of six weeks prior to the conclusion of the pilot i.e. no later than 28 May 2021.

Available options include:

## **Blended work**

Staff may apply to undertake work responsibilities from home in accordance with the following options:

1. **Work from home**

The staff member performs the majority of work from home. In the interests of promoting cooperative and collaborative working relationships, it is essential that an appropriate and agreed amount of the staff member’s work time is spent on campus. On these occasions the staff member will have access to a shared workspace (i.e. use reasonably available office workspace).

1. **Blended – office based and remote work**

Staff may request to perform a minimum of 60 percent of their role on campus and have regular periods of working from home (e.g. three days per week on campus, two days from home).

Staff working under a blended model will be required to return their University allocated device and peripherals to campus and establish a suitable working environment at their remote location. A suitable working environment will consist of adequate furniture, internet access and technology to enable a staff member to undertake their duties and ensure minimum workplace health and safety requirements are met.

Staff who are currently allocated a laptop will be able to use their device at both locations, however, will be required to supply their own suitable peripherals (monitors, keyboard, dock etc) at their remote location. Staff currently allocated a desktop will be required to ensure they have a suitable device and peripherals at their remote location. Please note conditions associated with working remotely from a [personal device](#_Technology,_facilities_and).

To assist staff with technology advice around establishing a remote workspace, an online portal has been created to simplify staff purchasing and to enable access to discounted educational pricing. Details can be found under the [ITS remote working support](https://federationuniversity.sharepoint.com/sites/FedUni/student-services/it-services/SitePages/Staff-Support.aspx) site.

The University will endeavour to replace desktop devices with laptops over a period of time. For staff using their own device at their remote location, access to Microsoft Office and VPN software will be provided. All other licensed software will only be provided on a University allocated device.

1. **Work from campus with casual flexibility**

Staff may apply to work from home as required on an ad hoc basis. As a general guide, casual flexibility would be less than 10 occasions in any three-month period, ensuring appropriate technology and ergonomics, in addition to determining that the position is suitable to perform hours from a remote location.

Federation University will consider all reasonable flexible work arrangements proposed by our staff, in addition to alternatives as detailed in the EA or TAFE Agreement. Applications will be considered in accordance with available technology, licencing, and position responsibilities.

Any application must be discussed with a staff member's manager or supervisor and are subject to policy requirements and processes.

Flexible working arrangements are not a substitute for childcare or other dependent care. Staff are responsible for ensuring that appropriate childcare or dependent care arrangements are in place whilst engaged in remote working arrangements.

Staff are not to contract out their work, undertake other paid work or operate a business while working remotely for the University without the approval of the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer or CEO TAFE.

No face-to-face meetings are to be held at a staff member’s remote workplace, and students are not to attend a staff member’s residence for any purpose.

Further options for flexibility under the EA and TAFE Agreement may also include:

## **Change to hours of work**

Staff may request to convert to part-time employment on a temporary, set period, or continuing basis.

## **Annualised hours (academic and general staff only)**

This form of employment allows for flexible part-time working hours for part-time staff, within any stipulated period – by negotiation between the staff member their manager or supervisor. Part-time staff can calculate the total number of hours to be worked over the 12-month period by using the [[Hours calculator - for general staff on annualised hours](http://policy.federation.edu.au/forms/hours.xlsx?_ga=2.138138871.631907232.1606688140-444896054.1565825100)](http://policy.federation.edu.au/forms/hours.xlsx) form. The flexibility of annualised hours means that staff and their manager or supervisor have the flexibility to manage how their annual hours are worked incorporating leave entitlements and public holidays.

## **Purchased leave (academic and general staff only)**

To support staff with family or other commitments there are options available for full-time staff to adopt a 46/48/50-week year for a negotiated 12-month period. The salary paid to them will be 46/52, 48/52 or 50/52 of their full-time salary.

Within the nominated 12-month period, staff may apply to have two weeks (50/52) or four weeks (48/52) additional annual leave, with a proportionate reduction in salary spread over the full year. All six (50/52) or eight (48/52) weeks leave must be taken during the 12-month period for which approval has been given.

These options incur their own application and approval processes, which can be found on the
[Human Resources web page](https://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources/leave-and-work-life-balance).

## Requests for flexibility

### Staff-initiated work from home requests

Managers and supervisors are best placed to assess and make decisions in respect to staff working from home requests. It is encouraged that support is obtained from the respective HR Business Partner prior to approving any requests.

Instances where it would be unreasonable to accommodate a work from home request include, but are not limited to:

* performing the role off campus creates a potential health and safety risk that cannot be effectively mitigated or managed;
* the home environment is not conducive to effective working;
* insufficient access to resources and equipment to perform responsibilities; and
* the nature of the role is such that there is a requirement for face-to-face interaction as an essential component of the student or staff experience.

Schools/Directorates may request equipment for staff who do not possess suitable technology to enable them to work from home, however this is at the discretion of the University and subject to sufficient budget allocation.

Staff are responsible for providing the appropriate furniture when working from home.

Managers and supervisors should work with the staff member to ensure that the proportion of hours requested to be worked from home in the arrangement support the following:

* education, research and service delivery excellence;
* the needs of students, external customers and work colleagues;
* the provision of an exceptional student experience;
* effective delegation and communication channels; and
* team collaboration.

For professional staff, days and times of working arrangements should fall within ordinary hours and span of hours (per clause 21 of the EA and clauses 27 and 28 of the TAFE Agreement).

Connection with campus life and University community should be maintained through at least a portion of overall hours being worked from campus.

### Employer-initiated work from home requests

The University may also propose work from home arrangements to staff.

Staff should accommodate work from home requests wherever it is reasonable to do so, with consideration for work from home location, home set up and family arrangements.

A staff member working flexibly will be treated no less favourably than any other person and flexible working will not be a barrier to promotion or management responsibilities.

The following instances may constitute an employer-initiated work from home request:

* the University campus presents a hazard to the health and safety, or on the advice of government and/or health authorities, the University may direct staff to work from home; and/or
* to ensure business continuity of an essential service.

## Position suitability

There are some circumstances where a flexible work arrangement may not be feasible. These circumstances can be either specific to the nature of the role or the circumstances of the staff member. Prior to any flexible working arrangement being approved or commencing, an assessment of both role and staff suitability needs to be completed. This evaluation should be completed by the staff member’s direct manager in consultation with the staff member and HR Business Partner using the [Flexible ways of working suitability assessment, checklist and plan](#Flexible).

## Technology, facilities and equipment

The [Flexible ways of working suitability assessment, checklist and plan](#Flexible) will be utilised to ascertain the equipment that is reasonably required at the identified primary work location.

Any University supplied equipment must only be used to conduct Federation University business and should only be used by the staff member. When the equipment is not in use, it should be stored in a safe and secure location.

When staff are working on personal devices at a remote workspace, University documents, data or related information must not be stored on home hard drives or storage. All documents must be saved and worked on using approved University storage services such as OneDrive and SharePoint. Any documents or data stored on home devices must be removed and not be accessible to any other person(s) who may share the device. Removable storage devices such as USB or external drive are also not acceptable storage locations, nor is sending University information using personal email accounts.

The staff member is responsible for the maintenance of all University supplied equipment and will report problems and faults as they occur. Staff will allow reasonable time and access to replace, service or repair supplied equipment as needed. Any replacement or service of supplied equipment must be facilitated through Federation University’s Information and Technology Services Directorate.

In order to facilitate working remotely, staff must have access to their own secure and fast internet/telephone connection. Staff are responsible for providing their own office furniture and any additional equipment, and must meet minimum workplace health and safety requirements relevant to the work being undertaken (e.g. the workstation should be ergonomically correct).

The University will not be responsible for any cost incurred by staff in the set up and maintenance of a suitable designated remote workspace.

All supplied equipment must be returned to the University upon termination of employment, or cessation of the working from home arrangement.

Federation University will consider all reasonable flexible work arrangements proposed by staff, in addition to alternatives as detailed in the EA or TAFE Agreement. Applications will be considered in accordance with available technology, licencing, and position responsibilities.

## Space management provisions

Assigned permanent desks will only be made available to campus-based staff or staff who are working more than 50 percent of their hours on campus.

Staff who primarily work from home (more than 50 percent of total work hours) will have access to shared workspaces whilst on campus and will not normally be allocated workspaces. Shared workspaces will be provided and will not necessarily be in the staff member’s normal team or designated School/Directorate area.

Ideally staff should develop a plan for days to be working at a nominated campus to allow for proper planning and provision of shared workspaces.

## Approval process and renewals

It starts with a conversation. For the purpose of good practice, staff should first discuss their intention to apply for a flexible working arrangement with their manager or supervisor as soon as possible: prior to applying in writing for consideration and approval, and prior to the commencement of any flexible working arrangement.

Flexible working arrangements are approved at the discretion of the University. Applications for remote working arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis in alignment with these principles, the relevant agreement, modern awards and the Fair Work Act. The University will respond to written applications within 21 days.

A formal application for staff selecting to work from home, or in a blended capacity will include:

* a [Flexible ways of working suitability assessment, checklist and plan](#Flexible);
* a [Home workplace health and wellness checklist](https://federation.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/499589/Home-Workplace-Health-and-Wellness-Checklist.pdf) in conjunction with an [Ergonomic self-assessment checklist](https://federation.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/485848/Ergonomic-Self-Assessment-Checklist.pdf#485848), available on the University website; and
* a [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement), providing details of the proposed arrangement;

Once approved, the [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement) remains in place until it expires, noting that any approval is for a maximum of six months in accordance with the duration of this pilot, and no later than 9 July 2021. If there is a change in circumstances that effect any of the above points, then a new [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement) is required.

Either the University or the staff member may terminate a [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement) by providing the other party with at least two weeks’ written notice.

Those staff whose preference it is to transition back to campus with casual flexibility will only be required to facilitate a discussion with their delegated supervisor, and complete:

* a [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement), providing details of the proposed arrangement.

## Appendices

Please note paper-based appendices 1, 2, and 4 will move online mid-2021.

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| *Appendix 1* [Staff and manager/supervisor expectations](#Expectations)*Appendix 2* [Flexible ways of working suitability assessment, checklist and plan](#Flexible)*Appendix 3* The [Home workplace health and wellness checklist](https://federation.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/499589/Home-Workplace-Health-and-Wellness-Checklist.pdf) and the [Ergonomic self-assessment checklist](https://federation.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/485848/Ergonomic-Self-Assessment-Checklist.pdf#485848), are available on the University website*Appendix 4* [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement) |

## Expectations

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| Staff must |
| * adhere to all the University’s policies and procedures;
* take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and the safety of others;
* be available for online meetings, phone calls and other interactions including relevant learning and development activities as would be expected if they were on campus;
* comply with any reasonable instruction that is given by the University;
* 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 [Risk, health and safety web page](https://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/risk%2C-health-and-safety);
* take reasonable precautions to protect University information.
* take reasonable care of any assets that may have been provided to them (i.e. laptops, phones), and take reasonable precautions necessary to secure the University’s equipment;
* when staff are working on personal devices at a remote workspace, University documents, data or related information must not be stored on home hard drives or storage. All documents must be saved and worked on using approved University storage services such as OneDrive and SharePoint. Any documents or data stored on home devices must be removed and not be accessible to any other person(s) who may share the device. Removable storage devices such as USB or external drive are also not acceptable storage locations nor is sending University information using personal email accounts;
* comply with the arrangements outlined in their [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement);
* deliver agreed work outcomes on a consistent basis;
* follow the same processes for notifying of absences (e.g. sick leave, carer’s leave) that apply to all University staff;
* promptly advise their manager or supervisor of any changes to, or affecting, the staff member’s working from home location;
* maintain accurate and up-to-date records of hours worked at home within normal span of hours; and
* identify potential distractions and put strategies in place to minimise them.
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| Managers/supervisors must |
| * assess each application for a working from home arrangement on its merits, and in accordance with these principles;
* respond to a staff member’s application within 21 days;
* ensure the staff member carries out health, safety and ergonomic assessments as required, and staff have been consulted on decisions about the adequacy of the work environment and facilities;
* supervise the staff member as they would if they were on campus while the work from home arrangement is in effect;
* monitor the working from home arrangement to ensure the staff member is consistently delivering agreed work outcomes;
* review and sign-off on electronic timesheets as required;
* monitor and review the working from home arrangement on a regular basis, as recorded in the [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement)*;* and
* ensure that the staff member has the ability to take part in team meetings, using audio/audio visual or teleconference communication and schedule regular meetings and catch-ups to help you maintain ongoing contact and foster positive working relationships.
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| **Section A** To be completed by staff member with their manager or supervisor, consulting with your HR Business Partner as required. Please refer to the **Blended workforce principles** prior to completing this form |
| Name |  | Employment mode |  |
| Position title |  | Campus |  |
| Portfolio |  | School/Directorate |  |

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| **To assist with the review of your application, please answer the following questions:** |
| What kind of supervision does the role require? Is the role one where a moderate to high degree of monitoring is a factor? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Can you undertake the required work from your remote location with the technology and equipment currently supplied? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Does the role require the staff member to be physically present with a team and/or other stakeholders? Will the other members of the team and/or stakeholders be able to perform their responsibilities effectively if the staff member undertakes a flexible working arrangement? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Is the staff member responsible for the supervision or coaching of others? If so, how would these responsibilities be managed? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Does the staff member’s role involve a significant degree of interaction with students or key stakeholders? How would this be managed? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| How would workflows be affected and managed, and what sort of communication practices would need to be put in place? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Does the staff member’s responsibilities require the use of equipment that could not reasonably be transported to, or used within, the remote work environment? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Will there be a risk to the security of Federation University confidential information, intellectual property and assets off-campus? How will security be maintained? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Are the hours proposed suitable in terms of responsibilities, student, team and key stakeholder contact and requirements? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| What is the appropriate amount of time/days the staff member is required to be on-campus, and how will this arrangement be facilitated? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |
| Does the staff member have caring responsibilities while working from home? If so, how will these responsibilities be managed? |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| *Comments and considerations:*  |

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| **Employee** |
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| **Employee**signature |  |  | **Date** |  |
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| **Manager/supervisor** |
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| **Manager/supervisor**signature |  |  | **Date** |  |
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| **Name** |  |  | **Title** |  |
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| **Section B –** to be completed by manager or supervisor and authorised by the appropriate delegate |
| I support this application for a remote working arrangement with the following justification |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
|  |

Queries regarding the application process may be referred to Human Resources for further guidance.

Following approval of the [Flexible ways of working suitability assessment, checklist and plan](#Flexible), you must now complete the following for approval:

*Appendix 3* The [Home workplace health and wellness checklist](https://federation.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/499589/Home-Workplace-Health-and-Wellness-Checklist.pdf) and the [Ergonomic self-assessment checklist](https://federation.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/485848/Ergonomic-Self-Assessment-Checklist.pdf#485848), are available on the University website

*Appendix 4* [Flexible ways of working agreement](#Agreement)

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| **Flexible ways of working agreement** |
| Name |  | Employment mode |  |
| Position title |  | Campus |  |
| Portfolio |  | School/Directorate |  |

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| Please state the primary reason for flexible work arrangement |
|  |
| Benefits i.e. please detail any benefit/s to the staff member and/or Federation University |
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| Please select the type of flexible work arrangement that best suits your requirements |
| [ ]  | **Work from home**The staff member performs the majority of work from home. In the interests of promoting co-operative and collaborative working relationships, it is essential that an appropriate and agreed amount of the staff member’s work time is spent on campus. On these occasions staff will have access to a shared workspace (i.e. use reasonably available office workspace). |
| [ ]  | **Blended – office based and remote work** Staff may request to perform a minimum of 60 percent of their role on campus and have regular periods of working from home (e.g. three days per week on campus, two days from home).Staff working under a blended model will be required to return their University allocated device and peripherals to campus and establish a suitable working environment at their remote location. A suitable working environment will consist of adequate furniture, internet access and technology to enable a staff member to undertake their duties and ensure minimum workplace health and safety requirements are met.Staff who are currently allocated a laptop will be able to use their device at both locations, however, will be required to supply their own suitable peripherals (monitors, keyboard, dock etc) at their remote location. Staff currently allocated a desktop will be required to ensure they have a suitable device and peripherals at their remote location. Please note conditions associated with working remotely from a [personal device](#facilities).To assist staff with technology advice around establishing a remote workspace, an online portal has been created to simplify staff purchasing and to enable access to discounted educational pricing. Details can be found under the [ITS remote working support site](https://federationuniversity.sharepoint.com/sites/FedUni/student-services/it-services/SitePages/Staff-Support.aspx).The University will endeavour to replace desktop devices with laptops over a period of time. For staff using their own device at their remote location, access to Microsoft Office and VPN software will be provided. All other licensed software will only be provided on a University allocated device. |
| [ ]  | **Work from campus with casual flexibility**Staff may apply to work from home as required on an ad hoc basis. As a general guide casual flexibility would be less than 10 occasions, in any three-month period, ensuring appropriate technology and ergonomics, in addition to determining that the position is suitable to perform hours from a remote location. |
| [ ]  | **Other**, please detail:  |

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| Please nominate your **primary** work location |  | **Working hours** (per week) |
| [ ]  work from home [ ]  on campus |  | From home |  |
| On campus |  |

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| **Monday** |  | **Tuesday** |  | **Wednesday** |  | **Thursday** |  | **Friday** |
|  | hours |  | hours |  | hours |  | hours |  | hours |
|  | start |  | start |  | start |  | start |  | start |
|  | finish |  | finish |  | finish |  | finish |  | finish |
| Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |

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| Please state the address of the proposed remote workspace |
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| **Technology and peripherals at remote workspace – staff who select to work from home only** |
| Supplied by Federation University | Supplied by staff member |
|  |  |

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| --- |
| **Equipment at remote workspace – staff who select to work from home only** |
| Supplied by Federation University | Supplied by staff member |
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| **Any additional comments or questions** i.e. variation to work hours, locations, travel, change of position, change of responsibilities |
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| **Employee** |
| I acknowledge that I have read and understood Federation University’s **Flexible ways of working agreement** in conjunction with the **Blended workforce principles**. I agree to comply with both the Agreement and Blended workforce principles and understand that failure to do so may result in early review and termination of remote arrangements and disciplinary action, including termination or cessation of employment.In the event that I return to campus in either a blended or full capacity, I declare that all University supplied technology, peripherals and equipment, will be returned to campus. |
| **Employee**signature |  |  | **Date** |  |
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| --- |
| **Agreement** |
| **Commencement** date |  |  | **Review** date |  |
| * *not prior to 11 January 2021 (nor to conclude later than 9 July 2021)*
 |  | * *a minimum of six weeks prior to the conclusion of the piloti.e. no later than 28 May 2021*
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| **Manager/supervisor** |
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| **Manager/supervisor**signature |  |  | **Date** |  |
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| **Name** |  |  | **Title** |  |
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| **Dean/Director/General Manager** |
|  |
| **Dean/Director/****General Manager**signature |  |  | **Date** |  |
|  |
| **Name** |  |  | **Title** |  |
|  |

Upon authorisation from the Dean/Director/General Manager, please send a copy of the agreement to:

1. the employee; and
2. Human Resources, for filing purposes.

Please note, this agreement will not replace the requirement for changes to modes of employment or changes to time fraction. Please consult your Human Resources Business Partner should you wish to explore alternate options available to you.