Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Pilot Blended Working Policy

Definition: *The term blended working refers to a combination of working from the employer's work premises and working remotely.[1]*

Implementation: *The proposal is to begin implementation of this policy in March 2022, however at all times Government health guidelines will apply, which could impact implementation. Working arrangements will always comply with Government health guidelines.*

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[1] *This is in line with current Civil and Public Service definition of Blended Working*

BLENDED WORKING - THE POLICY

Why we are introducing this now:

While the COVID 19 Pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our lives, like many disruptive processes it has challenged us to look at how we work. We now know that much of what we do, can be done remotely or from our office. Where a professional or support staff role can be done on a blended basis, there can be benefits to the individual, the University and the environment. We do recognise that blended working will not suit all professional or support staff roles and there is no 'one way' to do blended working, however we are embracing this opportunity and introducing blended working as a pilot for the next two academic years. As this is a pilot, we will be reviewing it during this period. Our aim in drafting and piloting this policy also complements other developments in train in Trinity related to supporting and advancing careers, flexible working for staff, etc. and is linked to Athena SWAN actions and activities in Trinity.

Note: We do recognise that pre-covid, some academic work has always been carried out in a blended way (e.g. from the office, lab, library and home). As Covid restrictions ease we expect academic staff to be back on campus, but able to continue to avail of this mode of working where appropriate. The purpose of this policy is not to change these existing practices but to expand opportunities for blended working to professional and support staff.
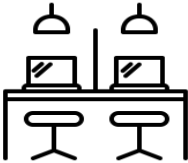
1. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles around blended Working.

2. The Principles of blended working

 New approach to work	Blended working offers benefits to the individual, the University and the environment. It allows some work to be carried out remotely and some work from the University campus. Blended working allows for people to stay connected to University life.
	There is no 'one size fits all' for blended working
	If all, or some of your work can be undertaken, done and delivered remotely, your role can be considered for blended working.
	If all of your work must be delivered in person, on campus, your role cannot be considered for blended working.

Depends on role and nature of the work	Many activities like, setting up of labs, maintaining equipment, operating machinery, working on the grounds, supervising activities on campus, providing catering services etc. cannot be done remotely.
	As a public sector employee, and in line with DPER current guidelines, you must be in the Irish jurisdiction to avail of blended working.*
University needs take priority	The needs and requirements of the University comes before individual preferences .
	Working patterns must be agreed by the individual and their line manager, taking into account the needs of the role, and the unit.
	Where blended working is in place, there will be certain events/times that require in person presence. These events should be agreed in advance (where possible).
Working space on and off campus	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.
	The remote working location must meet the health and safety standards set out in IProtectU self-assessment tool, to ensure that you are covered by the University's insurance.
Policies, Terms and Conditions	Your terms and conditions of employment do not change.
	All University policies still apply no matter where or when you work, as they support the culture of the University (i.e. Dignity & Respect, Equality, etc.).
	All University data must be safe and secure, everyone should continue to comply with GDPR and the **College Data Protection Policy** and all **IT Security Policies**. For further information please see **tcd.ie/data protection.**
	The relevant provisions of the Calendar and the Statutes still apply while working remotely.
	All Leave, must be agreed prior to taking it, and must be recorded.
	Tax relief on utilities may be claimed by the individual, directly with the Revenue Commissioners.
Manager agreement on working patterns	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.

While you must be within the Irish jurisdiction to avail of blended working, due to HRMC (UK Revenue) social security and tax issues, employees who reside in Northern Ireland(NI) and who ordinarily work for TCD in ROI can only work from NI for max 25% of their working time.

3. Definition - What does blended working mean:

The term blended working refers to a combination of working from the employer's work premises and working remotely.

4. Eligibility for blended working

a. Everyone is entitled to request remote working, but it is not a guaranteed right.

b. The work you do, and the needs of the school/department/unit will inform the decision on whether blended working is suitable for the role you perform. At all times the needs of the University are primary in the decision.

c. This arrangement should be supported/agreed by both parties (you and your line manager). If your situation changes you may need to review and discuss changing your working arrangements.

d. Once agreed blended working arrangements applies for your current role. If you move roles, you will have to make a new request as the role and position will be different and may or may not be suitable.

e. Some roles require individuals to be on site and in person. For example, gardeners, catering staff, security, maintenance etc., therefore blended working is not an option for these roles.

f. For face to face, in person student/other activities, blended working is not an option.

g. The equipment and facilities you require in doing your role, may also form a factor in deciding whether your role is suitable for blended working.

5. Health, Safety and Insurance Requirements

a. **Suitable for remote working environment**

You will require a suitable workspace to be eligible to work remotely. You will need to carry out a risk assessment (IProtectU self-assessment) on your working environment at your remote location.

b. **Insurance**

In order to be covered by the University's insurance, you must carry out the IProtectU self-assessment and submit it to you manager.

c. **Accidents**

It is important to ensure that any accidents which occur within the defined working space while working remotely must be reported immediately, in accordance with the University's accident reporting policy.

6. Different blended working patterns

There is no 'one way' for blended working arrangements; it will be based on the needs of the role and the individual preferences (i.e. role allows for someone to work remotely but the individual may not choose to work remotely), and the requirements of the unit.

Best practice suggests that there should be some agreed time in the office/workspace on a regular basis. This should be agreed between the individual and their line manager, whilst always taking the University's needs and the needs of the unit into account.

Staff availing of blended working arrangements may not have a dedicated workstation on campus, and desk sharing arrangements will be agreed as part of the blended working arrangements with the line manager.

7. Contractual Arrangements

a) Blended Working does not change your contractual entitlement in terms of general conditions of employment, pay, pensions, sick leave etc. All of the Universities policies still apply.

b) **Working Hours**

It is expected that staff will continue to work their contractual hours.

Staff must ensure they take regular breaks from the screen and desk

Staff have the right to disconnect.

Flexitime[2] is suspended, however flexible working (early/late start etc) is permitted.

c) **Recording Leave**

Annual leave, sick leave, and all other forms of leave must be recorded as normal.

d) **Jurisdiction**

As a public sector employee, you must be resident on the island of Ireland to avail of blended working, and in accordance with Department Public Expenditure and Reform (DEPR) requirements, you must be available to attend in person when required.

e) **University Data must always be secure and safe**

At all times the guidelines for secure and remote working mush be followed.

Please see GDPR statement here

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[2] **We note the unions position that access to flexitime schemes while availing of a Blended Working arrangement is the preferred option. Staff members who avail of blended working arrangements shall not be deemed to have given up access to formal flexitime schemes in any way**

f) Review of Arrangements

The agreement should be reviewed on a regular practical basis (minimum of twice a year) to coincide with performance reviews) to ensure all parties are satisfied that they are achieving their objectives.
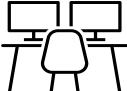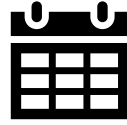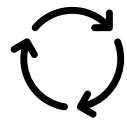
8. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed on the introduction of forthcoming legislation on *Right To Request Remote Working* to ensure legislative compliance.

END OF POLICY

THE PROCESS

How do I apply for blended working

Meet line Manager	Have an initial conversation with your line Manager and let them know you are interested in exploring whether blended working would work for you.
Complete request form	Complete blended working request form which can be found HERE
H & S Assessment	Complete Health and Safety Risk Assessment on IProtectU.tcd.ie. • Step 1. Complete the training module • Step 2. Complete the self-risk assessment This is automatically sent to your line manager on competition.
Meet line Manager	Meet Manager to discuss request in conjunction with self-risk assessment results.
Decision	Manager decision on principle. Manager takes into consideration needs of the entire unit and other working patterns. Where a blended working arrangement cannot be accommodated, the deciding manager should set out the reason
Agree work patterns	Agreement on work pattern between Manager and Employee. *Note: for those living in NI and who work for TCD ordinarily from ROI working from home in NI can only be availed of for up to 25% of working time.*
Agree when to review	Both parties agree review date and key deliverables.

Signed agreement	Copy of agreement (completed request form) retained by both parties. Manager provides information to Human Resources for data purposes by completing this form <link>
Tax Relief	Staff may qualify for tax relief for utility costs as long as it is supported by receipts and a letter of confirmation from the University. Guidance on how to claim this can be found here.

END PROCESS

GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Blended Working is a pilot in Trinity College, which will run for two academic years, starting in January 2022, until Trinity Term 2023. The principles based policy, and the process for engaging with this policy, will be reviewed regularly over this period as we learn from this new way of working. Blended working can have benefits for the individual, the University and the environment. In order to ensure we all have the best experience during this pilot, everyo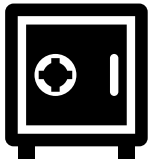ne has a responsibility to play their part in making this a success. The document below sets out general guidelines and responsibilities for both Managers and Staff members when engaged in blended working.

What	Manager Responsibility	Individual Responsibility
Work Pattern	• Days in the office and days worked remotely must be agreed by both parties prior to starting blended working. • There may be certain dates or times when a staff member is required to attend for agreed time/events/meetings/training.	• Days in the office and days worked remotely must be agreed by both parties prior to starting blended working. • Be available to attend on site when required.
Working Hours	• Ensure staff are available during agreed hours. • Ensure staff do not work excessive hours	• Agree working hours, starting and ending times with manager. • Be aware of when to switch off. • You must ensure that you can work free from disruption and have adequate care arrangements in place for dependents that may be at home during working hours

Sick Leave	• University's sick leave policy must be adhered to. • Sick leave must be recorded.	• You must comply with the [University's Sick Leave Policy](#). • Sick leave must be recorded
Communication	• Agree regular contact channels, times and dates, with staff member. • Check in with staff regularly to ensure they are doing ok.	• Stay in contact with your manager and your colleagues. • Set up formal and informal channels of communication and stick to them.
Performance Management	• Set clear objectives, standards and timelines for delivery of work. • Review work on a regular basis and give feedback, and development opportunities.	• Ensure you are clear on what is expected of you, and by when. • Ensure you engage with development opportunities to enhance your skills.
Health & Safety	• Review the self-assessment results. • Ensure the individual has all equipment necessary • Regularly discuss remote work environment to ensure continued compliance • Consider if Occupational Health Assessment is required prior to agreeing application.	• Carry out self-assessment risk. • Ensure you have correct equipment and are using them correctly. • Advise of any accidents in the workplace, remote or on site. • Advise your manager of any changes in your working environment.

Data Security & Confidentiality	• Ensure staff member is made aware of TCD's GDPR guidelines and protocols. • Handbook here • Training	• The College data protection handbook is available here. • Data protection training
Training	• Identify any training required to facilitate blended working .	• Carry out any training identified as required, before taking up blended working.
Tax Relief	Blended working expenses can be claimed by completing an Income Tax return. Staff can complete this form on the Revenue website as follows: • sign into revenue.myaccount • click on 'Review your tax' link in PAYE Services; • select the Income Tax return for the relevant tax year; • select 'Other PAYE Expenses' in the 'Tax Credits and Reliefs' page and insert the amount of expense at the 'Amount Claimed' section. As a claim may be selected for future examination, all documentation relating to a claim should be retained for a period of six years from the end of the tax year to which the claim relates. Please check the revenue website for details on how such relief is calculated. For employees who reside in Northern Ireland (NI) and work ordinarily in Republic of Ireland, HRMC (UK revenue) has ended the covid easement for temporary displacement. For TCD this means that those who live in NI but work for TCD in Republic of Ireland, can only avail of remote working (blended working) from NI for TCD for a maximum of 25% of their working time. This equates to approx. one day per week for a full-time employee.	
Request not facilitated	Any staff member unsatisfied with the outcome of a request for a blended working arrangement may address it through the relevant grievance procedure • SIPTU Procedural Agreement • UNITE Procedural Agreement • IFUT Procedural Agreement • General Grievance Procedure	

END GUIDELINES

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Blended Working Request Form

Step 1:   Employee Action. Complete information **and** send to your Line Manager (via email).

Employee Name:	enter name
Staff Number:	enter name
Proposed Start Date:	enter a date
Proposed End Date*:	enter a date
Proposed Blended Working Arrangement	
Number of Days work remote:	enter number of days
Days of week work remote: (please note if any half days are requested)	enter days of the week
Health and Safety Self-Risk Assessment	
Confirmation that I have completed Health & Safety Risk assessment on IProtectU.tcd.ie and I am aware that before I proceed with remote working I must discuss outputs of this with my Line Manager.	
Yes ☐	No ☐
*Home Address: You must provide your home address for the purposes of remote working *If you reside in NI and you intend to remotely work from NI this must be limited to 25% of your time if you ordinarily work from ROI for TCD.	enter Home Address
Please ensure that you update your personal information - by accessing CoreHR: https://my.corehr.com/pls/coreportal_trp, click on my profile (by clicking on your name) and update your home address.	

Step 2: Following Manager and Employee discussion, Manager completes and emails to employee.

Self-Risk Assessment completed and discussed, outstanding actions complete: (if no, request **cannot** proceed)	Yes ☐	No ☐
Request Approved	Yes ☐	No ☐
If the above request for blended working cannot be facilitated, please state reason why: enter reason		
Head of School/Support Service Area confirm agreement request cannot be facilitated for reasons set out above	Yes ☐	

Step 3: Manager and employee should retain a copy of this form.

Manager provides information to HR for central recording of information, by completing the online form.

END FORM