

HYBRID WORKING: THE BATH HYBRID MODEL

MIGRATION TO A FULLY FUNCTIONING MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Departments and individuals have shown flexibility and adaptability over the last two years, developing working patterns to remain effective through Government and public health restrictions. There has been a detailed review and evaluation of these 'Future Ways of Working' arrangements over the last two months that has included analysing the responses to Work & Wellbeing Surveys, in-depth interviews with Heads of Department, focus groups including with Trade Union representatives, as well as data from parking and Wi-Fi usage. This identified the benefits of, and the challenges experienced from, this hybrid working approach.

The University remains committed to a hybrid working approach, for all of the benefits identified in the evaluation exercise and has agreed to extend these arrangements on an ongoing basis. Hybrid working patterns will continue to evolve as teams develop new services, new efficient ways of working, embed new technology etc. The Future Ways of Working approach has been revised slightly as the Bath Hybrid Model for Professional Services staff.

This model is for staff in the Management, Specialist & Administrative (MSA), Technical & Experimental (T&E) and Operations, Facilities & Support (OFS) job families who are able to undertake their duties effectively away from the University premises. It should be noted that there are many roles in the OFS and T&E job families (e.g. cleaner / porters, electricians and technicians) that can only be undertaken on University premises so therefore staff in these roles would not be able to work on the Bath Hybrid model.

THE BATH HYBRID MODEL - FROM 1 AUGUST 2022

This model will allow staff and their managers to agree hybrid working patterns which reflect a **High** (80%+), **Medium** (60% to 79%) or **Low** (40% to 59%) attendance on University premises to undertake their role, as part of their team, effectively. We believe that such a framework and language for shaping working patterns has proved useful, and that it should continue.

In addition, we have identified two further options for the model going forward. The expectation is that these would be agreed on an exceptional basis only and would apply to a minority of roles:

- i. **Very Low hybrid option** - We recognise that there are a few roles where 'Very Low' attendance (<40%) on University premises can be beneficial for the Department and individual.

Heads of Department should be able to approve such attendance patterns, ensuring that they put the appropriate management and support in place. We believe that having regular, physical 'team' meetings where people can form that social connection is one way of ensuring team cohesion and maintaining individual connection with the University.

- ii. **'Largely remote' option** - We expect 'largely remote' working (visiting University campus once per month or less) to be a rare exception, where there is a very clear business reason and individual need for such an arrangement. As well as establishing a very different type of working with colleagues, it can also have HR and employment contract considerations. If Heads of Department are considering any such arrangements, they should seek advice and sign-off from the HR Business Partner, who will seek appropriate approvals, before putting any such arrangements in place.

All Departments will be encouraged to find more efficient ways to use space on University premises, considering the need for workstations and collaborative space. This should align with the implementation of a hybrid working model, and Heads of Department will need to ensure that space is used effectively across the week and year.

All Departments/Services will need to start to identify good practice for working patterns and styles appropriate to their particular function, both within and outside the sector. We would expect this to enable continuous improvement and engage members of the team in that process.

CONTINUING TO IMPROVE THESE HYBRID ARRANGEMENTS

The University will continue to monitor and review how these hybrid arrangements are working in liaison with our trade unions and the Staff Experience Board and other relevant University bodies. This will take account of operating them in an environment that is importantly different from that of the full COVID pandemic and lockdowns when they were first applied and as we work to continuously improve our professional services, post-lockdown. As teams develop and evolve, we would expect to continue to:

- Review the effectiveness of our working patterns
- Develop new ways of using space more effectively
- Devise team performance measures which can be used to manage outcomes, productivity and team sustainability
- Identify opportunities for improved ways of working, capitalising on the benefits offered by new technology

All of these are likely to affect and change hybrid models. As such, we believe that it is important that flexibility and agility continue to exist over the next few years as we settle into new ways of working. We will therefore keep this Bath Hybrid Model under review over the next few years and will continue to adapt and improve it based on our ongoing experience and learning.

THE SET UP FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF BATH HYBRID MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF

Based on the common success factors currently found around the University, the model of hybrid working that is recommended for the future has the following characteristics.

As a university we provide each hybrid worker with:

- A laptop and suitable carry case
- A desk, ergonomic chair, laptop riser and external mouse and keyboard for use at home
- The ability to book a workstation comprising of a desk, an ergonomic chair, docking station, monitor[s], external mouse, and keyboard on University premises
- Somewhere to store their personal effects, such as a locker

In addition, as a university we ensure that:

- Department desks, whilst bookable, are co-located to enable collaboration
- There is sufficient access to breakout space nearby, possibly shared with other, neighbouring departments
- There are sufficient bookable meeting rooms, set up for hybrid meetings, shared with other departments
- There are places to go for people to eat away from their workstation for the day

When it comes to working practices, we expect that:

- Each person understands that they are employed to support the work of the University community, and so the first consideration in decision making about time, location and effort is the impact on the wider community and team
- Each person can choose in agreement with their line manager, and with respect to the needs of what they are doing and the team as a whole, where is the best place to work from on a given day
- Each person can flex hours on the basis of informal agreement with line manager that takes account of being available to colleagues and customers, and the use of digital tools to achieve this
- Each person's line manager will agree the outcomes that are expected of them
- Each person fulfils their promises to deliver their outcomes to time and quality

Beyond this, we expect that each team and department has a regular conversation where they work out how to apply this model to their context given the needs of what they are trying to do and how they need to support one another in doing so.

We further expect that this conversation results in a locally agreed set of standards [e.g. team charter] that places the interests of the academic mission of the University at its heart and should be revisited as situations evolve and change.

It should be noted that education and research job family staff already have a form of hybrid working arrangements which will continue to operate.