



Policy and Procedure for Blended Working - FAQ's

16 February 2023

1 How do I apply for approval to avail of blended working?

Applications under the Policy and Procedure for Blended Working may be submitted to your line manager using an online application approval process which is available at the link [here](#).

2 How do I approve or reject an application for blended working? (For Line Manager)

Approvals or Rejections can be processed within the Review e-mail that the Line Manager receives after the Employee submits the request. If the Line Manager is unable to locate the Review e-mail after a period of time, they can also review the request and take the appropriate approval action by logging into the following PowerAutomate [link](#).

Requests pending review can also be found within MS Teams, under the Activity tab at the top left corner. Follow the steps outlined below, where the Line Manager can approve/reject any request that shows a status of Requested (number 4).

Please note that an application for blended working once submitted will expire after 30 days if no action is taken by the line manager. In such cases, the employee would need to submit a new application for blended working for consideration.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Teams interface. On the left, the 'Activity' tab is selected, indicated by a red box with the number '1'. The 'Approvals' section is visible, with a red box highlighting the 'Received 3' count. Below this, the 'Approvals' section is expanded, showing a table of requests. A red box highlights the 'Approvals 2' count. The table has columns for Priority, Request title, Status, Source, and Created. One row is highlighted with a red box, showing a 'Requested 4' status. The table contains the following data:

Priority	Request title	Status	Source	Created
	Blended Working Form Submitted for Re...	Requested 4		09/12/2022 13:38:25
	Blended Working Form Submitted for Re...	Approved		09/12/2022 09:53:40
	Blended Working Form Submitted for Re...	Approved		09/12/2022 09:46:47

3 What will the line manager consider when assessing applications received?

When considering a blended working request, managers must ensure the high-quality service provided to students and other stakeholders of the University is not negatively impacted. Some of the factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, the following;

- the business needs of the University
- the suitability of the role for blended working arrangements
- Employee suitability for blended working based on engagement, delivery of results and an acceptable time and attendance record
- Designated workstation requirements
- The requirement for a reliable broadband connection
- Whether the remote work location, as far as is reasonably practicable, meets the safety, health and welfare obligations of employees.

4 Can an employee on Probation apply for blended working?

Probationary employees may be considered for blended working. A line manager may require a probationary employee to attend the workplace to facilitate their adaption to the role and work environment and to assist in the assessment of work performance during the probationary period.

5 What is the decision-making process?

The line manager will decide on a request for blended working within a reasonable period following receipt of an application.

6 Can my application for blended working be refused?

The University reserves the right to refuse blended working requests and/or to modify or cease a blended working arrangement, which may previously have been in place based on the requirements of the University and/or satisfactory performance. The following are examples of some of the grounds (but not limited to) on which an application may be refused:

- Ability to meet the business needs of the organisation
- Ability to maintain the required level of service quality
- Team performance and team collaboration
- Lack of broadband connectivity

Where an application is refused a line manager must state the rationale for the decision not to grant blended working.

7 Where an application is refused, does an applicant have a right to request a review?

Where an application is refused, the applicant may wish to request a formal review. Prior to seeking a formal review, the applicant should have an informal discussion with their line manager. If the issue cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the applicant may submit a request for a formal review in writing to the Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources, or their nominee, will consider each application for review on a case-by-case basis.

The decision of the Director of Human Resources, or their nominee, will be communicated in writing to the applicant upon completion of this review.

8 Do terms and conditions of employment change if approved for blended working?

Terms and conditions of employment are as per your contract of employment and are not altered by virtue of blended working.

9 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The implementation and ongoing compliance of this policy will be the responsibility of the direct line manager, with the Dean's/Head of Department/Divisions playing a key role in the implementation of this policy and procedure. Policy review and adherence to same will rest with the Director of Human Resources.

10 Is the policy subject to review?

This policy shall be reviewed 18 months after its implementation.

11 Can I alter work locations over time?

The work location must be specified in the application form. For the avoidance of doubt, it does not include working from a second location or holiday home/location, cafe, or another public establishment. Blended working applications outside of the Republic of Ireland jurisdiction will not be facilitated. Should your work location change, a new online blended working application form will need to be completed. Where an employee plans to move work location, this should be discussed in advance with the line manager.

12 Who decides the attendance model?

The line manager will decide the attendance requirement in the office and the days that may be facilitated for remote working based on business and operational needs.

13 I work flexible hours, am I permitted to apply?

Yes. Employees who are already availing of flexible working arrangements (e.g., job share/part time) may request to avail of blended working. An application for blended working must be considered, in conjunction, with minimum office attendance requirements, on a case-by-case basis. Flexi-time cannot be accrued when availing of blended Working.

14 Is there any flexibility where business needs require on campus attendance more or less than 3 days per week at different points in the year?

Yes, the University recognises that in line with operational needs there may be circumstances where it may be appropriate for employees to work on-site for more or less than 60% of their contracted hours. In such circumstances, an employee may agree with their line manager to work more or less than 60% of their contracted hours on-site during these defined periods. Therefore, an employee whose application for blended working has been approved, may agree with their line manager, in line with operational needs, to work more or less than the maximum approved 40% of their contracted hours remotely for defined periods. Monitoring and recording time both on-site and off-site will be a matter for local management and a record of days worked on-site and remotely must be maintained and will be subject to review/audit.

15 Am I obliged to attend the office on the day I am scheduled to work remotely if requested by my line manager to do so?

Where blended working arrangements are in place, a manager may require an employee to attend work at short notice on-site outside of this agreement in line with the business need of the department/school/team/unit, either on a temporary or ongoing basis. In this scenario, the expectation is that a manager will give as much notice as is reasonably practicable and that the employee will facilitate this request to meet business need.

16 Will I retain my blended working approval if I change roles?

Should an employee move roles within the University, they will need to make a new application for blended working as the role and position will be different and may or may not be suitable for blended working.

17 Is approval for blended working indefinite?

No. Each application for blended working will automatically terminate at the end of an approved 12-month period and will be subject to on-going review.

18 What Health and Safety considerations apply to my remote work area?

Both the employer and employee have responsibilities in this area which apply regardless of the location where the work is being conducted. The designated workspace must be kept in a safe condition, free from hazards to both the employee and equipment. Equipment provided by the University is for the sole use of staff members whilst working remotely.

19 Can my remote working permission be terminated?

Blended working arrangements will automatically terminate at the end of the approved 12-month period. Blended working arrangements may also be terminated by the employee or the manager subject to four weeks' notice.

20 Are Utility costs covered for remote working?

No. The employee is responsible for all utility costs associated with working from home as part of an approved blended working arrangement, including Wi-Fi, heating, and electricity. The employee is also responsible for travel to office costs.

21 When are the Policy and Procedures for Blended Working being implemented by the University?

The Policy and Procedures for Blended Working are being implemented with effect from 16th January 2023.

22 What happens if I do not apply or I am not approved for blended working by 16th January 2023?

Employees are required to work on campus on a full-time basis from 16th January 2023 in the absence of an approved blended working application. For clarity, a person with a full-time contract of employment who has not had an application for blended working approved would be expected to be in attendance on campus 5 days per week from 16th January 2023 onwards.

23 On the online application form, the 'Submit' button is greyed out or is not working.

This normally suggests that a mandatory field does not have a response, or that a question is answered incorrectly.

If the Submit button is greyed out, this means that one or more questions numbered from 1-9, within the Display Screen Equipment Self-Assessment tab is set to 'No'. You can only submit an application if your responses meet the criteria of the Display Screen Equipment Self-Assessment and therefore questions numbered 1-9 should carry a response of 'Yes', in order to submit the application form.

Personal Details **Blended Working Details** **Display Screen Equipment Self-Assessment** **Home** **Submit**

Please answer the following questions in relation to your Remote Working location.
It is important that applicants have all the required and appropriate equipment to proceed with their application.

- Yes** I have a separate keyboard, mouse and monitor connected to my laptop.
- Yes** My workspace is set up to allow me to view the monitor at a height, which avoids bending of the neck for sustained periods?
- No** I have access to other suitable accessories such as a laptop stand (if required), which allows the laptop to be connected to the keyboard and positioned at a suitable height?
- Yes** I take regular short breaks from sitting by standing up and moving about for 1-2 minutes every thirty minutes.
- Yes** My workspace is set up to allow space in front of the keyboard to provide support for the hands and the arms.
- Yes** My chair is adjustable in height.
- Yes** My chair has a backrest that is adjustable in height and tilt.
- Yes** My chair has back support (for example a backrest or cushion).
- Yes** There is adequate lighting to allow comfortable working.
- No** Am I experiencing any musculoskeletal discomfort?

If the Submit button is active (highlighted in Blue), however you still cannot click on it, this suggests that one or more mandatory fields does not have a response. If this is the case, the mandatory fields in question will normally be highlighted with red text, as shown below.

Personal Details **Blended Working Details** **Display Screen Equipment Self-Assessment** **Home** **Submit**

The duration of your Blended Working Request must not exceed 12 Months.

- Start Date: 14/12/2022
- End Date: 13/04/2023
- Please select your FTE Value: 1
- Please indicate what percentage of your working week do you request to avail of remote working, this percentage can be up to 40%. (Slider set to 40%)
- If you request to work specific days remotely, please indicate these days from the list below: Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
- Reliable broadband connection is a necessity for effective remote working. Microsoft Teams requires 5Mbps download speed, while Outlook\Email requires a download speed of 2Mbps. Therefore, 5Mbps download speed is the minimum required for remote working applications to be approved.
- Please click [here](#), to access instructions on how to run a Broadband Speed Test.
- Please attach supporting evidence of broadband speed availability at the proposed Remote Working Address.
- I confirm that I uploaded evidence of my broadband speed.

There is nothing attached.
Click here to attach file

Attachments is required.

24 If there is a necessary requirement for me to work off-campus for university business purposes (i.e. attend a seminar / another university / business location), as part of my role, is this considered as an on-site working day or a remote working day?

If there is a requirement, as part of your role, for you to attend an off-campus work location, for University business purposes, then this time will be considered as an on-site working day (i.e. part of your approved on-site contracted weekly hours).

25 What is a reliable broadband connection/speed?

Reliable broadband connection is a necessity for effective remote working. Microsoft Teams requires 5Mbps download speed, while Outlook\Email requires a download speed of 2Mbps. Therefore, 5Mbps download speed is the minimum required for remote working applications to be approved.

26 What would monitoring and recording time both on-site and off-site look like?

Local management should decide how this is recorded. It may be a shared calendar/excel file, or another shared document between the employee and line manager.