NELSON MANDELA

UNIVERSITY

COVID-19 REMOTE WORKING GUIDELINES
v3

1. PURPOSE

1.1. These guidelines are designed to ensure that remote working is implemented where reasonably practicable and to ensure that employees remain productive and fulfil their obligations to the University.

1.2. The purpose is to establish guidelines for employees who are eligible to participate in the University's remote working program.

2. SCOPE

2.1. These guidelines apply to all employees eligible to work remotely due to circumstances, which the University may deem as justifiable for the purposes of implementing remote working such as, national shut down directed by government, student protests, industrial action, parenting needs or any health related reasons.

2.2. These guidelines outline when, how and with what support employees may work remotely as well as how they should communicate.

3. DEFINING REMOTE WORK

Remote work is any work that would ordinarily be performed in the traditional office environment, but which is now to be performed outside of that environment.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1. The University recognizes that there is a need for flexi-time, flexi-place and/or remote working guidelines.

4.2. The University retains the right to determine whether an employee shall be permitted or required to work remotely.

4.3. A decision as to whether an employee may work remotely will entail a consideration of, *inter alia*, the following:

    4.3.1. Whether an employee is eligible, by the nature of his/her job, to work remotely;

    4.3.2. Into which of the five categories (described below) the employee falls;

    4.3.3. Whether collaboration with the employee's team is possible;

    4.3.4. Whether the conditions at the employee's home, e.g. internet connectivity, workspace, personal circumstances (such as home schooling of children etc) are conducive to remote working; and

    4.3.5. Whether the employee has or can be provided with the necessary equipment and resources at home.

4.4. Employees may work remotely, either from home or an alternative location to the normal workplace for the purposes of performing specified work obligations or activities.

4.5. Line managers shall be responsible for:

    4.5.1. communicating achievable goals and expectations;

    4.5.2. managing the working hours and productivity of employees within these guidelines; and

    4.5.3. monitoring, coordinating, controlling and reviewing employees' performance.

4.6. Employees shall be responsible for:

    4.6.1. remaining contactable during the hours stipulated by their line manager;

    4.6.2. completing tasks within specified timeframes;

4.6.3. being available for any departmental meetings electronically or in person;

4.6.4. dressing professionally when communicating with clients and colleagues on the communication channels *via* video conferencing (ensuring that the background of their home looks professional and that there is no disruptive noise);

4.6.5. adhering to all the University's policies and procedures;

4.6.6. taking reasonable precautions necessary to secure the University's equipment and resources;

4.6.7. keeping updated with the University's communications; and

4.6.8. maintaining a level of productivity which may reasonably be expected.

4.7. Remote working does not constitute a reason for employees to fail to comply with their obligations and any failure may be met with appropriate measures including the institution of disciplinary action.

4.8. Employees must ensure that they have the necessary infrastructure and resources in place to be able to work from home. The University will provide employees working remotely with equipment and resources that are essential to their job/duties, such as laptops, modems, remote ICT technical support etc. Items such as printers, paper, ink cartridges, and ADSL or landline connections will be for the cost of the employee.

4.9. The use of any equipment or resources provided by the University for use at a remote location, is limited to authorized persons for purposes relating to University business only. The University's ICT Policy read with the necessary changes shall apply.

4.10. Employees shall be reimbursed for telephone and data related costs on a monthly basis in line with the University's policy governing this.

4.11. Conditions of Service remain the same unless otherwise communicated by University Management.

4.12. The line manager shall identify and categorize employees according to the following five categories:

4.12.1. Complete remote working arrangement where employees are able to fulfill all their duties remotely;

4.12.2. Partial remote working arrangement where employees are able to work from home, but will be required to access the campus from time to time;

4.12.3. Inability to work remotely where employees are unable to work completely or partially remotely and are not regarded as Critical or Essential employees required on site;

4.12.4. Critical or Essential employees engaged in critical or essential services and who are required to work on site and;

4.12.5. Vulnerable employees, being employees who are over the age of 60 or who have comorbidities (hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and/or respiratory system disease) which place them at a higher risk of complications or death if infected with COVID-19 and who may fall into any of the above categories.

5. **NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR REMOTE WORK**

5.1. The aim is to keep employees at home as far as may reasonably be required and possible in the circumstances and where they can continue working without spreading or contracting COVID-19.

5.2. Line managers shall categorise the employees reporting to them into the five categories and advise HR of the employees' remote working needs to ensure reasonable accommodation for all employees in the application of the programme.

5.3. The norms and standards for remote work may be adjusted based on government regulations implemented from time to time and the University's operational needs. The University shall communicate such changes to employees.

5.4. The application of the norms and standards do not replace existing conditions of employment or University policies applicable to all employees.

6. **STAY CONNECTED WITH EMPLOYEES**

6.1. It is important to communicate over different platforms (e.g. video conferencing, emails, chat groups etc) whenever possible to ensure that as many employees that are intended to be reached are in fact contacted. The nature of the communication will inform the method of communication to be applied.

6.2. Morning status updates

6.2.1. Line managers should run regular morning status updates (this may be as frequent as daily or infrequently as weekly) to help keep employees on track and communicate important information to the team. These meetings keep people in touch and connected, and serve as a way to share information.

6.2.2. Employees must be contactable and available for morning status updates as determined by their line manager. In addition, employees must complete tasks within specified timeframes so as to be in a position to provide accurate status updates.

6.2.3. Where appropriate, morning status updates should be conducted with teams as opposed to individuals to ensure the effective functioning of the team.

6.3. Frequent check-ins

6.3.1. Line managers shall check in with their employees as often as reasonably practicable in the circumstances and share any updates and changes in the department/faculty as well as follow up on important tasks.

6.3.2. Frequent check-ins with employees will serve to keep them informed which may decrease their level of anxiety during the remote working period.

6.3.3. Personal contact is key to, not only keeping employees informed, but also in allowing line managers to be informed of the employees' well-being during uncertain times.

6.3.4. Employees presenting signs of psychosocial ill-health may access the services of Wellness@work and line managers should render such reasonable assistance as may be required in order for employees to access these services.

6.4.   <u>Share more with your colleagues</u>

When working remotely, it helps to open up and share what is happening in your life with your colleagues and also allow colleagues to share. Sharing is a healthy way to continue to bond amongst and with employees and maintain relationships.