

Work Location Policy—frequently asked questions

These are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to guide and support the implementation of the [Work Location Policy](#).

Questions related to working from a residential worksite

1: What is the expected balance of days for working on and off campus?

Under this [policy](#), it is preferred that you work the majority of your days on campus and up to 40% from an alternative location, such as your home. For example, if you work full-time, this may be three days on campus and two from home.

This supports a sense of teamwork and camaraderie with your colleagues as well as high-quality learning, teaching and research outcomes.

2: Do I need to provide a reason to work from home?

If you are requesting to work from a residential worksite, such as your home, for up to 40% of your working week you are not required to provide a reason unless the responsibilities within your position require you to work on campus, such as accepting the delivery of goods delivered to on campus stores or working in one of the laboratories.

However, your manager may ask for some information to help them balance the on and off campus arrangements of the wider team.

No medical certificate or other documented proof is required if you are requesting the standard arrangements as laid out in the [Work Location Policy](#).

3: If only part of my job requires me to be on campus, can I work from home for the other responsibilities/tasks?

If part of your job requires you to be on campus, but the rest can be completed online/remotely, you need to discuss with your manager how the [Work Location Policy](#) may apply to you. Being able to complete some tasks remotely does not always mean you can work from home, it depends upon many other factors that you and your manager need to discuss in order to come to an arrangement that best meets your needs and responsibilities, the needs of your team and the requirements of the organisation.

4: How often is a work location agreement reviewed?

Once agreed with your manager, your work location agreement should be reviewed after one year, or sooner if required.

You or your manager can review your existing arrangement at any time, such as if your work requirements change or productivity issues arise.

5. Can I take equipment home when I work from home?

Under this [policy](#), staff can take home a work laptop when they request to work from an alternative location, such as their home. Staff are expected to provide any additional equipment they may need to work from their chosen alternative location successfully and safely.

6. Can I vary my arrangements on a week-by-week basis?

Possibly, but this will vary across work groups. Your arrangements will need to be balanced with others' arrangements within and across teams. Consult with your manager, providing as much notice as you can to help alternative arrangements to be explored.

7. Will I have to share my on-campus office or workspace if I work from home some days?

So that Griffith may optimise its use of space, there may be situations where offices and workspaces need to be shared.

8. Why do some staff have different work from home arrangements to me?

Decisions on working from a residential worksite will be based on a diversity of considerations including the inherent requirements of the job, availability and portability of digital resources and the needs of the organisation, teams (within and across teams) and staff member. This will mean that there will be a diversity of arrangements amongst staff.

9. What if my manager refuses my work from home request?

If a staff member is unhappy with a decision made in respect to a request to work from a residential worksite, a genuine effort should be made to resolve the matter between the staff member and their manager. In circumstances where it is unable to be resolved, the staff member may request a review of the decision by their Head of Element.

10: Can my manager direct me to work from home?

The University or your manager may direct staff to work from home in response to Queensland Government public health directions or for other health and safety reasons.

Supervisors and managers should discuss and decide on appropriate alternative work arrangements for their teams with their Head of Element as per the principles outlined in the [Work Location Policy](#).

11. Can my manager ask me to change the days that I had organised to work from a residential worksite?

Working remotely is a flexibility measure that may support your personal circumstances, but there may be times where the University's circumstances may change, and in order to ensure operational requirements continue to be met, a manager may request that you change the days that you work from a residential worksite.

12. What happens if a staff member with a flexible arrangement transfers to another department or had an arrangement in place with their previous manager/supervisor?

The staff member and the staff member's new manager should discuss the situation and determine if the staff member's current flexible arrangement is appropriate for the new position and work area(s).

13. What if a preferred candidate would like to work from a residential worksite for some days?

This may be negotiated by the hiring manager (in consultation with the head of organisational unit) informed by the [Work Location Policy](#).

14. I'm a manager and a staff member has not appeared as professional when working from their residential worksite. What are the expectations?

Staff working from a residential worksite are expected to uphold usual expectations about professionalism, for example, they are dressed appropriately, they respond to phone calls and emails and are typically working as if they were on campus. When working from a residential location, we recommend that it may be appropriate to put in place a Teams background.

Questions related to the limited work from home options within certain roles, such as client-facing roles.

15. If my role involves activities that are campus-based, such as engaging with colleagues and or students or equipment, am I unable to work from a residential worksite?

Some roles, due to the nature of the work involved, are typically not suitable for working from a residential worksite. However, if you have a specific need to work from a residential worksite, contact your manager to discuss if this may be accommodated.

Questions relating to ill-health and other needs to stay home.

16. I need to stay home due to a dependent being unwell, can I work from home?

Working from home is not suitable for the direct care of high-need dependents. Relevant staff may be eligible for family circumstances leave or sick leave in these instances. Where the care of the dependent is not high-need (for example, the staff member is still able to work) the staff member can discuss their situation with their manager. As a general principle, when working from a residential worksite you should be able to work as if you were on campus.

17. I am receiving a trades person, or important delivery, can I work from home?

Possibly, depending on your role. Any arrangements will need to be balanced with the needs of your role and that of others within the team (and in other teams). Consult with your manager.

18. Where can I find more information on workplace flexibility (broader than working location) at Griffith?

Our [workplace flexibility site](#) outlines information on:

- formal flexibility options within our Enterprise Agreements
- parenting rooms
- parking (for example, special permits—temporary mobility and pregnancy)
- childcare and School holiday care
- leave provisions including Parental Leave; Family, Cultural Obligations, Domestic and Family Violence and Other Special Circumstances Leave.

19: I am unwell or have tested positive for COVID, can I work from home?

Your health and wellbeing is our priority. If you are unwell, whether with COVID or any other illness, please use your sick leave so you can rest and recover.

If you feel you are well enough to work from home, or you are COVID-positive but have no symptoms, discuss working from an alternative location with your manager to determine if it is appropriate and practical for you to do so.

Questions related specifically to academic contracts

20. As an academic I have always worked flexibly, have expectations changed?

Academic roles have always required flexibility to support research and teaching activities. This includes flexibility of work location and teaching hours (for instance, due to evening and weekend classes), however, such flexibility has not necessarily been available for professional staff. While the University is not attempting to remove an academic's work flexibility, the [Work Location Policy](#) defines a set of principles to support safe working at residential worksites in line with staff and student needs. This includes the completion of the [Working from a Residential Worksite Self-Assessment Checklist](#).

21. Do academics need permission to work from a residential worksite?

If an academic wishes to work from a residential worksite, or from an alternative location, they should discuss with their line manager and other relevant individuals to make them aware of proposed arrangements. In cases where an academic wants to work from a residential worksite up to 40% of a week there needs to be:

- discussion with, and approval from their manager and
- completion of the [Working from a Residential Worksite Self-Assessment Checklist](#).

22. If I am unable to deliver my class face-to-face can I move my lecture online?

Ordinarily, academics should deliver their classes as per the course profile and agreed student timetable, however, in very exceptional circumstances (such as when an academic is awaiting a COVID test) this may be possible. Considering the impact this will have on students, an academic should seek permission from their Head of School and discuss the proposed student communication plan.

23. Another Griffith campus is closer to my home, can I have an office at that location?

Over the next couple of years, the University will be conducting space master planning. During this process, we will consider how to better support flexible working. At present, it is not possible to formally provide accommodation for everyone wanting to work flexibly at a location other than their primary campus. Where some elements have staff working across campuses, location arrangements, such as the provision of hot desks may be possible.

Questions related to National Employment Standards.

24. The Work Location Policy refers to the National Employment Standards. What are they?

The [National Employment Standards \(NES\)](#) are 11 minimum employment entitlements within the Fair Work Act 2009. One of the minimum requirements of the NES is Requests for flexible working arrangements and may include options broader than working remotely or from home under this [policy](#).

Examples of flexible working arrangements include changes to:

- hours of work (e.g. changes to start and finish times)
- patterns of work (e.g. split shifts or job sharing)
- locations of work (e.g. working from home).

Employees (other than a casual employee) who have worked with the same employer for at least 12 months can request flexible working arrangements if they:

- are the parent, or have responsibility for the care, of a child who is school aged or younger
- are a carer (under the Carer Recognition Act 2010)
- have a disability
- are 55 or older
- are experiencing family or domestic violence, or
- provide care or support to a member of their household or immediate family who requires care and support because of family or domestic violence.

Requests for flexible working arrangements

Requests for flexible working arrangements have to:

- be in writing
- explain what changes are being asked for
- explain the reasons for the requested change.

Written responses to requests

All managers/employers who receive a request must provide a written response within 21 days which outlines whether the request is approved or refused. Employers can only refuse a request on reasonable business grounds. If a request is refused the written response must include the reasons for the refusal.

What are reasonable business grounds?

Reasonable business grounds can include:

- the requested arrangements are too costly
- other employees' working arrangements can't be changed to accommodate the request
- It is impractical to change other employees' working arrangements or hire new employees to accommodate the request
- the request would result in a significant loss of productivity or have a significant negative impact on customer service.

(Source: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/flexibility-in-the-workplace/flexible-working-arrangements>).