



University of
St Andrews

Flexiquette guidance

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Please find below guidelines to support flexible working across different times and different spaces. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [Hybrid Working Guide](#).

2. Useful information, policy and guidance links

- 2.1 The [Flexible Working policy](#) aligns with the University's commitment to provide equality of opportunity and developing work practices and policies that encourage a healthy work-life balance. This policy has been developed to support flexible working arrangements to help employees achieve more balance between their work and personal lives.
- 2.2 The IT [working from home guidance](#) provides information on what technology you need to work effectively at home, how to connect to University systems and drives, and how to effectively communicate with colleagues. For additional guidance on establishing a Home Office, please access the [home workspace equipment policy \(including a Display Screen Equipment assessment\)](#).
- 2.4 Staff should access the [Staff Wellbeing webpage](#) for guidance and support on staff wellbeing including physical, mental, nutritional, workplace and relational wellbeing. The University's [Occupational Health Service](#) also provides an excellent source of information to staff in need of support and advice on health related matters.

3. Online meeting etiquette

- 3.1 Schools and units are encouraged to develop their own local policies with regards to online meetings, core hours for meetings, and open-door or 'drop-in' sessions as long as these are in line with wider University policies and guidance e.g. those designed to ensure safety. The following tips can help guide this process:

Keeping meetings focussed

- Adopt a 50-minute hour (start meetings at 5 past the hour and end at 5 to the hour).
- Build in comfort breaks for meetings lasting longer than an hour.
- Consider the need for and frequency of meetings. The ['do we need this meeting?' decision tree](#) can help guide that process.

Setting and respecting boundaries

- Be clear about your work schedule and respect the boundaries set by others e.g. where possible, avoid booking meetings on non-working days for staff 'required' to attend meetings, avoid booking meetings on top of existing commitments of colleagues where these are visible etc.
- In particular, set your [working hours](#) in Outlook to indicate when you are normally available for meetings.
- Encourage team members to use [scheduling assistant](#) when creating meetings to consider potentially varied working hours.
- Alternatively, use your [email signature](#) to indicate your working hours or times that you may not be available (e.g. *I respond to emails Monday to Friday between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm; or My working pattern is Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I will respond to emails as soon as possible on receipt*).
 - Consider providing information on maximum number of working days within which you will respond.

- Be mindful of the working hours of colleagues when anticipating a reply to your communications.
- Set your [Teams status](#) and status message to indicate your availability.
- Encourage team members only to phone/instant message colleagues when status is 'Available'.
- Consider developing core hours and 'open door' policies for the online environment (e.g. core meetings take place between 10am and 4pm); consider colleagues' work patterns in this process so that your plans are inclusive.

Managing your video

- If you are using your camera and prefer not to share your home environment [set a background, or blur your background](#).
- Be mindful of what you are wearing and/or behaving on camera to ensure that a professional image is maintained. For instance, it would not be appropriate to log in to a meeting, internal or external, dressed in pyjama/lounge wear; nor would it be appropriate to smoke/vape while on camera. Behaviour and conduct expectations remain in place as if staff were working on University premises.
- Ideally have your camera switched on when speaking.

Being inclusive

- Use the Participant panel on the toolbar to see who is in the meeting and to ensure you do not miss anyone.
- Use the 'raise hand' function to help everyone contribute to the meeting discussion.
- Although speakers would normally be expected to have their cameras on when speaking, allow cameras to be turned off if a participant does not want to use the camera due to privacy, safety, technology or personal reasons.
- Use meeting chat to encourage participation.
- Avoid using meeting chat to make off-business comments that might make some participants feel excluded.
- If responding to a chat message in an online meeting, read out the message to which you are responding
- Adopt a buddy system for those with disabilities or who find it hard to interject in online meetings.
- Ask direct questions so participants can easily respond with a thumbs up or down.
- Avoid using private chat during group meetings, unless you are trying to contact the host or are helping someone else participate.
- Encourage participants to use the shared meeting chat to send messages with other participants openly - use the '@' to tag a message to an individual participant where considered necessary.

Recording meetings

- Meetings should not be recorded unless for a genuine reason, or in a teaching situation. Please read the [Guidelines on recording of meetings](#) for further information.
- Make sure that participants are aware that you are recording a meeting.
- Where possible, at the end of the meeting ensure that the recording is available to all participants.
- Do not keep recordings longer than strictly necessary.
- Consider a change to [meeting settings](#) to limit who has permission to record a meeting.

Socialising at work

- Schools and units could [schedule a reoccurring \(weekly\) Microsoft Teams meeting](#), as an open invitation for all School/Unit staff to engage in informal catchups. Staff attendance at the meetings should be voluntary. Pre-scheduling a meeting in a channel avoids a particular individual having to take responsibility for organising the meeting.

Line management

- Line managers should schedule formal meetings with each of their direct reports (either individually or in groups) regularly. The frequency of these meetings should be mutually agreed in advance.
- Offer employees time to discuss matters with their line manager regularly and in a private setting i.e. workloads, personal matters etc.

4. Security essentials

4.1 When undertaking flexible working and home working, staff have the responsibility and duty to monitor and maintain security whilst using facilities and equipment provided by the University. **The following protocols must always be adhered to protect personal data and information:**

- Users should, as far as possible, store and access files from the University network which can be accessed remotely via the [University VPN service](#). Alternatively, only use University approved storage systems such as OneDrive and Teams etc. Avoid saving University personal data and/or information to private/family/home devices.
- All confidential materials and/or any personally identifiable data held should be managed in accordance with the [University Information Classification policy](#) and the [supporting implementation guide](#).
- Passwords in many instances is the first and last line of defence to protect the University information and ICT services – do follow the [University guidelines on strong passwords](#). Passwords are confidential – never share your password with anyone; if you suspect your password has been compromised e.g. via an email [phishing attack](#), immediately call IT Services.
- Purchasing of any personal equipment with the intent of working for the University must first be approved by IT Service teams, prior to purchase, and must remain up to date for security purposes. Refer to the [Home Workspace Equipment Policy](#) for information.
- From time-to-time IT Services will push system updates to University laptops, PCs, Smartphones, tablets etc. It is essential that those updates are applied as they become available – those help to protect University ICT systems and services from malicious attack.

4.2 Line Managers must ensure that all employees within their department are familiar with the [University ICT Regulations](#) and the policies and guidelines, listed above, as well as [Hybrid Working Interim Guidance](#) and any guidelines and protocols put in place by [IT services](#) regarding working from home. Further guidance on data protection can be found on the [FAQ pages](#), or from the [data protection page](#) on the University website.

5. Version control

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New guidance	Published	Ruth Woodfield Assistant Vice-Principal (Diversity)	24/09/2020
1.1	Change to review date	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	01/04/2021
1.2	Removal of Covid references.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	08/12/2022
1.3	Amending of broken links only.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	23/04/2024
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