

Procedure: Home-based work

Purpose

To define the safety requirements and responsibilities of approved delegates, supervisors and staff relating to home-based work as part of the Australian National University's (ANU) commitment to flexibility for staff, to minimise the risk of injury at ANU and to ensure compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)* and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations, 2011 (Cth)*, the *Safety and Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (SRC Act) 1988 (Cth)* and the University's Work Health & Safety (WHS) Management System.

Definitions

Approved Delegate means General Managers, Research School and Service Division Directors or above.

Home-based Work means regular performance of University work for agreed hours from the home-based site.

Home-based Work Site means an agreed area in the staff member's private dwelling. This may include temporary arrangements in an alternative private dwelling such as the home of a family member.

On-campus work is work undertaken at the person's normal workplace on-campus, i.e in a building or structure which is owned or managed by the ANU or recognised as an ANU department where staff and students work or study.

Off-campus work is any work authorised by the University to be undertaken away from a person's normal workplace which is not on-campus, i.e within a building or structure which is not owned or managed by the ANU or recognised as an ANU department. Off-campus work includes attending a conference or conducting research or teaching activities at another University or institution; or any University supervised or coordinated route, travel or excursion to an off-campus location for the purposes of extracurricular activities.

Fieldwork is any work authorised by the University to be undertaken at an off-campus location, and is external to a building or structure. Fieldwork includes activities such as an archaeological excavation or marine sampling and involves work in a remote area.

Local area refers to a College, Research School or Service Division of the University.

Remote area is a location separated from an appropriately resourced urban centre by distance, terrain, access, time and/or available communication links. A remote area is on land or water. A remote area is not necessarily related to the distance from an urban centre. In the event of an emergency, assistance would be delayed, with the possibility of adverse outcomes. Remote areas can apply to off-campus work or fieldwork.

Supervisor means the person who is responsible for day-to-day supervision of the staff member.

Procedure

Scope

1. This procedure applies to all staff, while conducting University business activities at a home-based work site, either within Australia or overseas.
2. It excludes University business conducted off campus, as fieldwork or in remote area locations away from their usual place of work and while travelling, which is not conducted in a home environment. Requirements for these conditions are covered in the [Working safely away from campus procedure](#).

Introduction

1. The University has developed this procedure to assist local areas with identifying, evaluating and managing WHS risks associated with home-based work.
2. The University is committed to fostering and developing an environment in which staff simultaneously excel at their roles while fully participating in their broader lives.
3. The University achieves this in part through flexibility for staff as it applies to responsibilities, achievements, personal and professional development and success at work.
4. Home-based work may form a part of [flexible work arrangements](#) requested by staff with the agreement of the University's approved [delegate](#).
5. Requests for home-based work are assessed with regard to the requirements of the College, Research School or Service Division, the staff member's duties, cost, the proportion of time to be spent at the home site, and the suitability of the home-based work site.
6. The University endeavours to accommodate the needs and preferences of the staff member where possible. While all requests for flexibility are considered by the approved delegate having regard to the work area's priorities, these arrangements are not rights and are available only after approval of the delegate has been received.

7. Staff undertaking home-based work are covered by the same principles of the *Safety and Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (Cth) that apply to staff on campus.
8. Common reasons for requests for home-based work include:
 - to assist staff in balancing family and carer responsibility in accordance with the [work and study flexibility policy](#);
 - to support a healthy work-life balance for staff with other external commitments;
 - in conjunction with a return to work program following injury, subject to assessment of the Rehabilitation Case Manager; and
 - To assist staff living with disability in maintaining healthy and equitable participation in University life in accordance with the [disability policy](#), the [equal opportunity policy](#), and the [workplace adjustments](#) process. Please refer to the information on Workplace Adjustments to ensure appropriate support for staff living with disability as this may supersede the Home Based Work Procedure in these circumstances.

Responsibilities

Staff, supervisors and delegates must ensure that an approved Off Campus Workstation Assessment (OCWA) and Individual Flexibility Agreement (IFA) are in place prior to the commencement of home-based work. The only exception to this being where the home-based work location will not be available or accessible until after the commencement of work (for example – a staff member moving interstate or overseas where they will then be working from a home-based work site).

In these circumstances:

- a. provisional approval of the home-based work agreement should be sought and documented between the staff member, supervisor and delegate (eg by email) prior to the commencement of home-based work;
- b. the staff member should be provided with or directed to the Injury Prevention Information Sheets on [Setting up a Home-based Workstation](#) and [Working from Home](#); and
- c. the OCWA (including photo) and IFA should be submitted as per the usual process (outlined below) within 2 working days of the commencement of home-based work at the new home-based work site.

Delegate

1. The relevant delegate, is responsible for considering and approving initial and review home-based work requests in accordance with this procedure. This includes consideration and approval of costs to be paid by the work area relating to a worksite assessment, set-up and/or reasonable adjustment of the home-based site.

Supervisor

2. The relevant Supervisor is responsible for reviewing home-based work requests and assisting to detail the arrangements, work tasks and conditions of work that is in place, including consideration of review by the Work Environment Group (WEG), for the approved delegate's consideration.
3. The relevant Supervisor is responsible for providing clear goals and expectations, monitoring the staff member's progress and undertaking a review of the home-based work agreement in consultation with the staff member informally at 3 months after commencement of home-based work and then at least once every 12 month period through resubmission of the OCWA and IFA in HORUS.

Staff

4. Staff members are responsible for consulting with their supervisor about the proposed home-based work arrangements, providing all necessary documentation and undertaking the relevant work health and safety assessments in consultation with WEG or suitably qualified health professionals and as detailed in this procedure.
5. Staff members are responsible for checking whether working from home has any impact on any existing insurance arrangements they may have, including public liability or their own equipment covered by home contents insurance, and any obligations they may have to notify their insurer that their home is to be used for work purposes.
6. Staff members undertaking home-based work are responsible for associated costs such as chair, desk, internet or telephone expenses and other household running costs unless agreed otherwise by the delegate and documented as part of the process below.
7. If a staff member becomes unwell, has an accident or sustains an injury while undertaking home-based work, the staff member is required to report to their Supervisor and report hazards or incidents via the Workplace safety incident and hazard reporting tool ([Figtree](#)), within 24 hours of this occurring.
8. Staff members undertaking home-based work are required to follow the same processes for notifying of absences (e.g. sick leave, carer's leave) through HORUS that apply to all staff.

Work Environment Group

9. WEG is responsible for providing a home-based work assessment, and advice on recommended ergonomic adjustments through the process documented below and providing a list of suitably qualified health professionals to undertake a site inspection, if deemed necessary.

Applying for home-based work as part of an Individual Flexibility Agreement

1. A staff member discusses their request for a home-based work arrangement with their supervisor and with the supervisors informal agreement submits an Off Campus Workstation Assessment (OCWA) through HORUS including a photo of the proposed home-based work site with the staff member positioned at the workstation.
2. The OCWA workflows to their supervisor for formal endorsement and then to WEG who will review the work health and safety standards of the home environment from the information provided, for assessment of the home-based work site.
3. WEG will either approve or decline the home-based work site giving advice on any required changes which should be implemented prior to the OCWA being resubmitted.
4. To ensure the staff member has an appropriate set-up and to reduce the possibility of injury, WEG may determine that a site inspection of the home based work site is required (in person or through an online option such as ZOOM). This is to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional, with any costs of the assessment to be met by the relevant College, Research School or Service Division. If access to the home-based work site is required to complete such an inspection, the consent of the employee is required before the visit at a mutually agreed time.
5. Once the home-based work site is approved, the OCWA will then workflow back to the delegate for final approval.
6. The staff member then submits an Individual Flexibility Agreement outlining hours and days of work through HORUS which will workflow to the supervisor for approval.
7. The approved delegate assesses applications for home-based work having regard to the following:
 - the requirements of the College, Research School or Service Division including the potential impact on performance of the work unit as a result of the home-based work arrangement;
 - the essential requirements of the position and suitability of the staff member's duties for home-based work;
 - any cost to be funded by the relevant College, Research School or Service Division;
 - the proportion of time to be spent at the home-based work site and the potential impact on the staff member's work performance as a result of the home-based work arrangement;
 - whether there is a suitable home-based work site available, as assessed by the WEG; and

- in the case of a return to work program following injury, home-based work is assessed as suitable by the Rehabilitation Case Manager and an appropriate medical practitioner.
8. The University ensures that a staff member working from home has the same opportunities for professional training and development as University based staff.
 9. All University policies that apply at the staff member's usual place of work apply to the home-based work site as far as practicable.
 10. The University is not responsible for any liability on the part of a third party that is not a staff member of the University at the home-based work site.

Suitability of work for home-based work arrangements

1. Examples of duties that may be considered unsuitable for home-based work include work:
 - that requires the staff member to service University facilities/assets;
 - where the staff member requires access to specialist equipment or facilities not able to be accessed or provided in a home-based work site;
 - where the staff member is unable to maintain confidentiality of information at the home-based work site; and
 - where the staff member has little control over the workflow or demands of the job.

Designation of home based work site

1. As part of the application for home-based work, the staff member informs the University of the designated area in the home to be used as the work site. The area designated is deemed to be the home-based work site and all other areas of the dwelling are not classified as the work site.
2. Work health and safety inspections may be carried out in order to ensure that the proposed site is habitable and conforms to acceptable work health and safety standards commensurate with the type of work being undertaken and the risks involved. Such safety standards include (but are not limited to) working smoke alarms, door locks and emergency egress points.
3. If access to the home-based work site is required by the University, the consent of the employee is required before the visit at a mutually agreed time. The purpose of the visit must be stipulated when seeking the employee's consent and may include access for WHS purposes, maintenance of faulty equipment, or monitoring security arrangements.
4. The approved delegate must be satisfied that appropriate measures are in place to ensure the security of University information and assets.

5. The approved delegate seeks additional advice from the WEG prior to approval if there are any pre-existing or ongoing concerns that require specialist work health and safety advice.
6. Approval for any proposed working from home arrangement is not granted by the approved delegate until any modifications to the home based work site, as recommended by the WEG, have been made.
7. If a suitable designated home-based work site is not identified and cannot be created within the nominated dwelling, a working from home arrangement is not approved.

Terms, conditions and duties - Negotiation and Agreement

1. If the home-based work request is approved, the terms and conditions of the home-based agreement are discussed/negotiated and agreed to by the staff member, supervisor and the approved delegate through the OCWA and IFA forms in HORUS.
2. The terms and conditions include methods by which the supervisor monitors the staff member's home-based work, e.g. staff member's delivery on their performance development review (PDR), regular reviews and feedback, phone calls, or other communication mechanisms. Home-based work is a shared responsibility and the supervisor has an obligation to provide clear goals and monitor the staff member's progress.
3. As a minimum the home-based work agreement and terms and conditions are reviewed informally by the supervisor after 3 months and by resubmission through HORUS at least every 12 months.

Termination of the home-based work arrangement

1. The University reserves the right to discontinue a home-based work arrangement if the operational requirements of the business area are no longer able to be met through the flexible work option.
2. Prior to expiry, either party may terminate the agreement provided that the party wishing to terminate gives reasonable notice.
3. Reasonable notice is four weeks if the previously agreed period for home-based work was for six months or more; or two weeks if the previously agreed period for home-based work was for less than six months.
4. The OCWA and IFA will expire after no more than 12 months and should be resubmitted through HORUS if a home-based work arrangement is to continue.

Sources

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| Legal and other requirements |
| <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)</i> |
| <i>Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)</i> |
| <i>Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Cth)</i> |

Document information

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