

# Hybrid Working Guideline

## What is it?

This guideline outlines the hybrid working arrangements at RMIT University, balancing on-campus presence with flexibility to work from home. It also provides information for managers and professional employees regarding the establishment of team hybrid working arrangements, for professional employees only, and outlines the process for requesting individual hybrid working arrangements.

The Hybrid Working Guideline is part of the Flexible Work Policy suite, but it is distinctly different to a flexible work arrangement and remote work. Employees seeking to make changes to their work arrangements, such as reduced time fraction or job sharing, must apply through the appropriate channels.

## Who does this apply to?

This guideline only applies to professional employees: casual, continuing and fixed term at RMIT University. It does not apply to executives and senior executives, professional employees within RMIT University Pathways and RMIT Online, or RMIT's overseas entities.

## 1. Approach to Hybrid Working

RMIT is committed to providing a vibrant and supportive environment for both students and employees. Hybrid working arrangements are built around three key elements:

### 1.1 Primary Workplace

The primary workplace during learning and teaching peak periods is on campus/or in the workplace. This ensures that students receive the best educational experience and have access to the necessary support.

### 1.2 Regular Presence

A regular presence of staff on campus is built around in-person moments that ensure staff are reconnecting with their teams, students and other stakeholders in a meaningful way. These moments are based on core role requirements, connections with each other and contributions to individual teams.

### 1.3 Eight Hybrid Working Principles

There are eight principles that guide the approach to hybrid working at RMIT, and align efforts towards RMIT's mission are:

- **Campus-Based Workplace:** The campus is the primary workplace during teaching and learning periods, with remote work permissible outside these times.
- **Responsibility:** All employees are responsible for building relationships, supporting new colleagues, and nurturing existing connections. Face-to-face interactions are crucial for relationship and network development.
- **Role-Based Flexibility:** The nature of employees' roles determine the suitability of hybrid arrangements. Individual plans must consider student experiences and the need for in-person interactions.
- **Leadership:** Leaders are vital in shaping hybrid models that address student needs and promote a collaborative environment.
- **Team Approach:** Collaborative efforts guide local decisions regarding hybrid working while enhancing the overall experience for employees and students.

- **Flexibility:** The aim is a balance of an engaging on-campus experience with individual flexibility in managing work commitments.
- **Accountability:** Both employees and managers are accountable for fostering open communication, trust, and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of hybrid arrangements.
- **Inclusion:** RMIT's commitment to inclusion, connection, and belonging applies to all work arrangements.

## 2. Team Hybrid Working Arrangements for Professional Staff

Employees are primarily employed to perform their roles on campus. However, professional employees are entitled to work in accordance with their team hybrid working arrangement. Each team must document their hybrid working arrangement, specifying both on-campus and work-from-home arrangements.

### 2.1 Considerations for Team Hybrid Working Arrangements

When establishing a team hybrid working arrangement, managers must genuinely consider several factors, including:

- the student experience
- the views of the entire team
- the effectiveness and efficiency of remote work
- the benefits of face-to-face interactions
- collaborative team-based approaches
- balancing in-person University experiences with employees' individual flexibility needs
- availability of technology to support hybrid work, and
- potential impacts on job satisfaction and work-life balance.

### 2.2 Modifying Team Arrangements

The University may modify a team hybrid working arrangement with at least 10 working days' notice, provided the manager has consulted with the team regarding the relevant considerations outlined in 2.1 above.

### 2.3 Individual Hybrid Working Arrangements

Employees must adhere to the established team hybrid working arrangement. However, employees and their supervisors may agree to individual hybrid working arrangements that differ from the team arrangement.

Requests for individual hybrid working arrangements are distinct from flexible work arrangements. When evaluating a request, supervisors should consider:

- a) the benefits of face-to-face interactions
- b) the ability of the employee and team to fulfill their roles effectively while balancing remote and on-campus work
- c) functions or duties that require on-campus presence
- d) specific events or activities mandated by the University that require on-campus attendance
- e) workplace health and safety compliance, and
- f) local work unit needs and potential impacts on other employees or students.

Individual hybrid working arrangement requests require manager approval. Requests may only be denied on reasonable business grounds. The University must respond to requests within 15 working days, providing written reasons for any rejections. The manager may seek support from the People Team as needed.

If a request is denied, the manager and employee will meet to discuss reasonable alternative arrangements proposed by the employee. Any agreed-upon alternative will be documented and implemented.

## 2.4 Modifying or terminating individual hybrid working arrangements

**Collaborative agreement:** Both the employee and the University may agree to modify or terminate an individual hybrid working arrangement at any time.

**Employee initiated:** An employee may terminate their individual hybrid working arrangement at any time, with at least 10 working days' notice. Upon termination, the employee will revert to the team hybrid working arrangement.

**Employer initiated:** The University may unilaterally terminate an individual hybrid working arrangement with at least 10 working days' notice, provided that:

- The termination is based on reasonable business grounds
- The supervisor and employee have genuinely attempted to reach an agreement on alternative arrangements
- Written reasons for the termination are provided to the employee.

## 3. More information

- To support managers/supervisors of teams to document the team hybrid working arrangement, a template has been devised for optional use (and tailoring).
- Creating a team commitment – conversation guide for leaders