



# **Adapting to blended working**

How the European Institute  
implemented new ways of  
working for its staff

## 2 Adapting to blended working – European Institute

Carl-Ludwig Campbell, European Institute Manager, explains how his team successfully adapted to blended working.

### Blended working – making it permanent

Over the 18 months of the pandemic, Professional Services Staff in the European Institute worked primarily at home. During this time, they demonstrated that they can work remotely while maintaining our high work standards: students and other colleagues were fully supported the period.

Collaborative working was supported (and even enhanced) through the new technologies embraced by the School; meetings were easier to arrange, more efficient and better attended; and the EI PS Team maintained its cohesion and spirit through regular Zoom meetings.

### Introduction

As we exited lockdown, the School was eager to return to a vibrant campus environment whilst retaining the best elements of home working for PS Staff. The EI HoD and DM both think there is much to be gained by the new approach to blended working, and we have therefore made this a permanent policy within the Department.

Our guiding principles and service standards ensure that blended working will enhance, not hinder, collaboration and service delivery. Agreed objectives and outputs include a strong focus on collaboration, teamwork and citizenship. Finally, but crucially, blended working has significantly improved the work-life balance for Professional Service Staff.

### Our Guiding principles for blended working

1. We will continue to meet set service standards, work objectives and outputs.
2. Students and colleagues (academic, PSS, research) will be well supported, both online and in person.
3. The European Institute (both physical and virtual) will remain a vibrant and welcoming environment for both staff and students.
4. Team relationships and cohesion will be maintained and supported.
5. Team members will get the support they need

6. to work effectively in a blended environment.
6. We will adhere to LSE HR policy on blended working, which this document is based on.
7. The EI Manager and Head will monitor progress of the scheme, including its impact on students and PS staff well-being.

### Service standards

1. Each member of staff will agree their working hours with their line manager. Agreed hours must include core School hours of 10.00am-4pm.
2. We will operate rotas for staffing the office. There will be a term-time and out-of-term-time rota. Business need is the primary consideration in determining the rotas.
3. EI PS Staff are expected work on campus a *minimum* of 40% per week.
4. Any member of staff who wishes to work on campus more than 40% is very welcome to do so, and may – at times – be required to.
5. PS Staff will respect the working day when working from home, including being available for contact via Teams.

*“As we exited lockdown, the School was eager to return to a vibrant campus environment while retaining the best elements of home working for PS staff. There was much to be gained by using blended working, so we have made it a permanent policy in the Department.”*

### Office occupancy, rotas, and team communications

The EI PS Office is staffed five days a week, using a rota system to ensure coverage. There is a term-time rota, and an out-of-term-time rota. During term time at least three members of the team should be present, though this will often be more. Sub-teams will be represented as much as possible throughout the week and, crucially, each sub-team will all work fully together in the office at

least one day per week. There will be at least one member of the Programmes and Student Affairs team in the office five days per week during term time.

Although we will work to a rota, staff may be asked to cover events, student activities or another colleague's annual leave on a day when they are not usually scheduled to be in the office. We will not normally compensate time at home for staff working these additional days in the office, nor will we expect staff to work an extra day in the office if they are on leave (or need to be at home) during a rota'd day.

Managers will do their best to ensure there is sufficient notice before any changes to the rota are made, and staff are asked to make any rota swaps within their own sub-team in the first instance.

## Team communications

Staff are expected to be contactable via teams on home working days. Team meetings are held in a hybrid format on the first Tuesday of the month, and weekly team 'catch-ups' (also hybrid) are held every Thursday morning. These weekly catch-ups are important for maintaining whole-team cohesion and spirit. Ad hoc collaborative and face-to-face meetings on Teams or Zoom are strongly encouraged.

Managers are asked to have regular one-to-one catch-ups with their team colleagues, and to check in regularly with their teams on home working days. The European Institute operates a flat structure, with managers working to the same rota and standards as all other team members, and including the DM.

## Office hours and contact with students

Staff are expected to be in the office throughout the working day (including core hours), with physical drop-in office hours for students advertised as follows:

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 10.00am – 4pm  
Tuesdays: 10.00am – 2pm

(The earlier closing time on Tuesdays is to support staff attendance at departmental committee meetings.)

Student communications stress both the physical *and* virtual EI Office, and students are advised that they will receive the same service standards if they engage with us virtually or in-person. Students are very welcome to visit us in the Center Building during our office hours, or contact us via email at [ei@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ei@lse.ac.uk). We endeavour to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much sooner.

Students are also advised that they can schedule an online meeting with individual members of the team during scheduled office hour timeslots (bookable on the Student Hub), or via ad hoc online meetings, as necessary.

## The EI office environment

The PS office (CBG 7.13) has been modified, with the introduction of soft seating for meetings and touch-down spaces. There are enough desks/touch-down spaces in the Department to allow the full team to work in the office on any given day if desired/required. We are liaising with Estates to procure a lockable door/barrier to span the corridor and provide a secure space for staff.

PS Staff operate a 'clear desk' policy, allowing anyone to sit at any desk within the PS Office. This includes the DM office. All staff retain a pedestal for personal effects, and we endeavour to allow staff to sit at the same desk when they are in, rota allowing.



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

The London School of Economics  
and Political Science  
Houghton Street  
London WC2A 2AE

**Email:** [fwow@lse.ac.uk](mailto:fwow@lse.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** +44 (0)20 7955 0000



**lse.ac.uk**

The London School of Economics and Political Science is a School of the University of London. It is a charity and is incorporated in England as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts (Reg no 70527).

The School seeks to ensure that people are treated equitably, regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or personal circumstances.

Design: LSE Design Unit ([lse.ac.uk/designunit](http://lse.ac.uk/designunit))  
Photography: Nigel Stead, LSE School Photographer.