

Blended Working: Framework for Service Areas

Introduction

This framework supports local areas to implement LSE blended working consistently.

It provides advice and guidance on what the blended working principles mean in practice. It is recognised that no single set of arrangements will suit all areas; therefore, service leaders and managers should operate within this framework when making decisions about the feasibility of blended working for members their respective teams.

Our aims within LSE 2030 – Educate for Impact, Research for the World and Develop LSE for Everyone – continue to be at the heart of these blended ways of working. The blended working principles and the accompanying framework supports our commitments to Empowered LSE, Healthy LSE, Inclusive LSE and Sustainable LSE and support the effectiveness and wellbeing of our staff in achieving these aims.

Key Aims

As a result of the impact of Covid-19, many professional services staff started working remotely and, following the reopening of campus, this practice has continued for, on average, 40 to 60% of the time. Our pulse survey results and the ongoing consultation with our community show that this has been beneficial in a number of ways for many staff and should be retained. In parallel, staff recognise the benefits of working together on campus in order to maintain collegiality and collaboration, and that some student and staff-facing roles are, and will remain, campus-based when not in emergency conditions. Our move to a blended working approach aims to balance both of these important aspects.

Scope

Blended ways of working is being rolled out amongst professional services staff in divisions initially, including the required equipment, space and policies/processes in place to support the evolution of blended working. Feedback is being collected and performance monitored to ensure that it is positively supporting both the business need and individuals' work life balance. However, it is inevitable that there will be lessons learnt as we go forward and we will regularly review the project and make adaptations as

necessary to address specific challenges that arise. The next stage of the project will then be to consider other parts of the School and how the principles and learning might apply.

Key Considerations

Whilst staff have benefitted from remote working in many ways, there have undoubtedly been challenges. The aim is to ensure that blended working benefits staff wellbeing in addition to improving effectiveness and delivery. As such, managers should ensure that when discussing and implementing these new ways of working, they are mindful of any equity and safety considerations and put measures in place, in accordance with this framework, to mitigate these. *An overall Equality Impact Assessment of blended ways of working has been carried out and managers should refer to this when making decisions about their staff.*

Principles

Blended working enables staff to be more flexible in how, when and where they carry out their work. It should always be carried out in a way which supports and fits in with the needs of the organisation and the operational requirements of the relevant team(s).

The following principles underpin the framework of blended working and should be referred to when putting this into practice:

Collaboration: Blended working should enhance, not hinder, collaboration. Team delivery will continue to be an integral part of the School's success and teams will work together to deliver to tight deadlines. Technology will be used to promote connectivity. Objectives and outputs agreed will include a strong focus on collaboration, teamwork and citizenship.

Flexibility: Performance will be measured by outputs – both specific work deliverables and community building activities. The campus will continue to be the primary place of work, but work may be carried out remotely or in different locations on campus. Location will be driven by the needs of the activity being carried out and employees will be empowered to choose their times and ways of working within criteria that relate to business and service needs.

Inclusion: Blended working is one of several different policies that are available to support staff in their work life balance including the Flexible Working Policy, Core Hours Policy and Homeworking Policy (*links to be included*). It will be available to professional services staff, initially to be rolled out to staff in divisions, in accordance with the type of work carried out. It is recognised that blended working cannot apply to certain roles and activities, due to the need for regular physical attendance on campus. All staff regardless of role will be treated fairly and engaged in a positive team culture and campus experience.

Sustainability: Each of us taking active steps to reduce our use of resources and carbon footprint in the workplace.

Accountability: Blended working is intended to enable staff to take ownership of their objectives both at a team and individual level. Objectives and assessment of performance should be output, not time, driven. Managers and staff are responsible for following the Effective Behaviours Framework (*include link*) which will be taken into account when measuring performance

Safety: The safety of staff in carrying out work is of prime importance in all roles. Employees will be able to take a more active role in their own health and safety.

Transparency: There will be open and frequent forums and channels of communication, including both formal and informal channels (e.g. Teams chats). Staff will ensure that they keep their availability status up-to-date to enable full collaboration with colleagues.

Principle	Key Factors	Blended working approach
Collaboration	Location	Where their role permits, staff may request to work part of their time remotely or on campus (generally 40 to 60% of contractual hours on campus depending on role). Location is agreed between an individual and their manager according to the nature of the work activity being undertaken; collaborative spaces will be available on campus.
	Onsite Presence	Individual teams within divisions (e.g. usually a maximum of ten individuals) agree a regular day to come together on campus. This will normally be weekly and will be no less than once a month. Individual team meetings and one-to-one meetings held in person on campus. Recruitment and induction of new staff members carried out in person on campus with key colleagues (e.g. team members, key stakeholders) available to support their induction. Hybrid meetings will be held where necessary to account for the combination of different working patterns. In such cases, relevant technology should be used and the meeting managed carefully to ensure inclusivity regardless of location of individuals. The need for on-site presence at meetings (including formal meetings) will take into consideration factors such as length of meeting, number of individuals and the type of matter for discussion. Onsite activities should be held in accordance with the aim of supporting collaboration, LSE community and sense of belonging; such activities would most likely include training sessions and team building sessions. Participants in small, informal meetings will decide on the most appropriate format.
	Technology	Relevant software and hardware will be provided to enable staff to make full use of collaborative tools to stay connected whilst working remotely. All staff to attend training and take responsibility for using relevant and newly-adopted collaborative tools. Technology used to promote effective and constructive working relationships in line with the Etiquette Policy for Email and other Online Communication Tools (<i>include link</i>). All staff who are working remotely to take responsibility for using the room booking system and undertaking any necessary training as necessary.
Flexibility	Delivering Outputs	Objectives discussed through the CDR process and specific deliverables agreed on an ongoing basis. Outputs include a balance of specific individual 'work tasks', e.g. report-writing, with collegiate activities, e.g. collaboration on a project, supporting colleagues. Regular one-to-ones held which focus on outputs and measure success. Employees take responsibility for updating managers on progress against deliverables on a regular basis. Managers regularly provide employees with feedback.
	Building Capability	All relevant managers attend training on managing remotely. Staff undertaking blended working attend training on remote working/delivering outputs. Relevant support provided to staff to help them achieve objectives and outputs.
	Hours of Work	Core opening hours continue to operate from 9.30am to 5.30pm. Flexibility in working hours may be possible and should be discussed between managers and individuals. Regular, permanent flexible working arrangements are requested in line with the Flexible Working Policy (<i>include link</i>).
Inclusion	Onsite working	Campus is designed to provide facilities and spaces to promote a positive campus experience. Access to wellbeing and collaborative events to support engagement and connection with other onsite workers and those working remotely.
	Remote working	Managers are in regular contact with staff regardless of their location of work.

		<p>Teams take responsibility to virtually connect with, and support, colleagues when working remotely.</p> <p>Staff take opportunities to connect with colleagues (particularly more junior colleagues) on an informal basis when working together remotely.</p> <p>Staff with disabilities are provided with reasonable adjustments to allow them equal access to blended working.</p> <p>Decisions made on work distribution/opportunities, reward and promotion are based on outputs, not location.</p>
Sustainability	Business travel	<p>Online collaboration: attending and organising meetings and events without the need to travel, making the most of the digital tools available to us. We all take active steps to minimise business travel, and in particular air travel, as a simple way to reduce our carbon emissions.</p>
	Printing	<p>Digital Smart: working and collaborating on documents using the digital and online tools we adopted while working from home. We embrace the transition from paper to Digital Smart to reduce our use of resources and direct impact on the environment.</p>
	E-devices	<p>Less is more: as we adopt new ways of working, we make the most of our resources, and rationalise our use of e-devices. Switching to virtual phones, centralised printing and only buying devices helps reduce our environmental impacts.</p>
Accountability	Individuals	<p>Individuals ensure they are clear about their required outputs.</p> <p>Blended working is used to enhance their performance, and that of others, by taking the opportunity to carry out work in the most effective way/location. Individuals take responsibility for their developmental needs and, where applicable, raise issues that are affecting their performance with their line manager.</p> <p>Individuals take responsibility for keeping themselves up-to-date with team/division/School developments.</p> <p>All staff take responsibility for maintaining positive relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and the wider LSE community regardless of location.</p>
	Teams	<p>Teams take ownership for shared objectives and support each other in achieving these.</p> <p>Teams work together to produce outputs, ensuring that they work collaboratively and on campus where necessary.</p> <p>When working remotely, teams stay connected by using virtual tools.</p>
	Managers	<p>Managers ensure that they set SMART working objectives for their staff, including those related to the Effective Behaviours Framework.</p> <p>Regular CDRs, one-to-ones and team meetings are held to ensure individuals and teams stay connected.</p> <p>Managers take positive steps to support team morale, staff wellbeing and engagement.</p> <p>When issues/development needs arise, managers deal with these supportively, putting relevant measures in place to address them.</p>
Safety	Working Environment	<p>Staff complete the online health and safety assessment – for both campus and remote working - indicating any issues of concern.</p> <p>Staff undertake relevant online health and safety training and follow recommendations, i.e. regular screen breaks, remote desk set-up.</p> <p>Managers undertake online health and safety training and carry out relevant risk assessments.</p>
	Workload	<p>Managers ensure that required outputs are reasonable in terms of role, grade and working hours and do not place an individual under unreasonable pressure.</p> <p>Managers regularly 'check-in' with staff and, where workload is of concern, work with them to help identify priorities and provide additional support.</p> <p>Staff promptly bring workload concerns to their manager's attention.</p> <p>Managers carry out individual stress risk assessments where appropriate.</p>
	General wellbeing	<p>Managers actively promote and role model good wellbeing practice in line with the School's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (<i>include link</i>).</p>

		Wellbeing is an integral part of one-to-one discussions and objectives/outputs – both in terms of individuals supporting themselves and others. Staff proactively maintain their wellbeing and use the available School resources where relevant to address concerns.
Transparency	Use of Technology	Technology is used to promote communication and accessibility. Individuals take responsibility for ensuring their availability is up-to-date and clearly outlined as set out in the Etiquette Policy for Email and other Online Communication Tools. Managers are accessible to staff and ensure that they regularly update on their whereabouts – both online and in person.

FWOW/PP/HR/24March21 (Updated 8 June 2021 and 27 April 2022)

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
123	tbc	tbc

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	08/06/21	SMC	abc
2	27/04/22	SMC	abc

Links

Reference	Link
Blended Working Policy	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/Assets/Documents/Blended-Working-Policy-FINALv.3.pdf

Contacts

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Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	Yes/ No
Will training needs arise from this policy	Yes/ No
If Yes, please give details Training needs will be addressed through the Blended Working Development Programme	