TU Dublin Agile working agreement during Covid-19

30 November 2020

*To be read in conjunction with Agile Working Principles, Part B Moving Towards a New Way of Working*

**1.0 Introduction**

As a result of COVID-19 and since the start of the restrictions the university has followed government guidelines and public health advice, and we have adapted remarkably well to working in new ways. COVID-19 has affected the way in which we work, and we continue to learn and adapt to those changes and challenges. In responding to this crisis, the safety of our staff remains paramount.

The university is committed to ensuring all staff are fully supported while working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. In responding to the restrictions to our working life brought about by Coronavirus, the university has worked hard to support and facilitate staff to work remotely insofar as is practicable. On 14 August 2020, the university agreed agile working principles set out in Part B of the *Moving Towards a New Way of Working*[[1]](#footnote-1). One of the agreed principles states: “*There will be an Agile Working Agreement in place. Agile working can be accommodated where a staff member and a manager agree that the work can be self-managed, typically at home. The staff member and their manager will agree the terms of the Agile Working arrangements locally, which will be formally documented. The arrangement is ultimately about trust and accountability, however, to facilitate understanding and to manage expectations, a Standard Agreement will be included and will address the following.*

* *start and end times outside of the standard working day (which can be as flexible as is possible);*
* *Work plans and deliverables in accordance with normal contractual hours;*
* *Communication and Team meetings and contact times;*
* *Arrangements for ceasing the Agile Working Agreement”*

The purpose of this document is to provide further clarity in relation to the Agile Working Agreement and the process underpinning it. The Agile Working Agreement and the supporting on-line process will be kept under operational review.

**2.0 Scope**

The Agile Working Agreement applies to all TU Dublin staff, who are required to work remotely for some or all of their working week, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with government and HSE guidelines. With the varying nature of existing roles, not all staff members will be able to have the same degree of flexibility. Some staff may already have a normal work pattern that involves a mix of working remotely and working on campus. Other staff will be able to use the Agile Working Agreement to affect a similar arrangement while the university continues to combat the spread of Coronavirus.

It is understood that staff who can work from home will continue to work from home.

Staff working from home under existing arrangements with their manager, are asked to review those arrangements in the context of this document and are expected to have an Agile Working Agreement in place as outlined below for the duration of the current working arrangements resulting from COVID-19.

Staff are reminded that any actions, arrangements or other undertakings given or operated by employees during this national crisis are on an absolute without prejudice basis and will not be used in any way by TU Dublin as a precedent nor example in any subsequent industrial relations discussions.

**3.0 Agile Working Agreement**

The following Agile Working Agreement has been developed to facilitate remote working. Remote Working is “ultimately about trust and accountability”. In order to “facilitate *understanding and to manage expectations*” the following Standard Agreement will be used, as appropriate. It is expected that staff and managers will use this agreement to guide them with understanding of the expectations with this new way of working.

Staff should familiarise themselves with the content of the Agreement and address any gaps with their Head of School or Line Manager as appropriate.

1. **Work Pattern**

The University’s Agile Working Agreement underscores the need for maximum flexibility for staff in varying circumstances. The University acknowledges the challenges facing our staff who have caring responsibilities for people, for children and others who live with them. It also acknowledges that some staff face physical and mental wellbeing challenges. The university also recognises that for staff with disabilities, working from home is a development that can assist their performance of their duties, as they do not have to expend energy in travelling to work, or negotiating the physical workspace. On the other hand, staff with mental health challenges may feel isolated and challenged to cope without the supportive social environment provided by the workplace. In these instances, managers and colleagues should be mindful of the need to provide support.

It is important to clarify the work pattern, so that there is understanding about expectations for face-to-face meetings or team-based events as they emerge, including those that emerge unexpectedly.

**Right to disconnect**: Normal working hours are in the range of 8am until 6pm for most staff except managers. Staff working remotely are encouraged to “switch off” and disconnect from work outside of the normal working hours, during annual leave and rest breaks.

 If you have agreed working hours that are different from your normal working hours and are therefore sending emails outside of normal working hours it is recommended that you include a notice on your email signature that says “*If this email arrives outside of core working hours please do not feel obliged to respond.”* Alternatively, you may use the “delayed send” function so that emails arrive during normal working hours.

1. **Work plans and deliverables**

You are expected to fulfil your specific role requirements as agreed with your manager while working remotely. In addition, it is expected that all staff will continue to work on objectives set within the Performance Management Development Process (PMDS) and the deliverables and outcomes agreed will be kept under review as normal. Progress will be monitored in the normal way. If there are any special /alternative duties assigned to facilitate remote working, these should be discussed, agreed and defined within the agreement.

1. **Communication, Team meetings and contact times**

Working from home can result in staff feeling isolated, working longer hours and blurring the lines between work and family life. It is therefore more important than ever that you keep in contact with your team and your manager and stay connected and informed. While it is intended to continue with virtual meetings via Microsoft (MS) TEAMS, you may be required to attend for some face-to-to face meetings or other events from time to time which may result in the need for attendance on days when you might normally expect to work remotely. This may occur in exceptional circumstances and may be unavoidable. It is acknowledged that a degree of flexibility on behalf of managers and staff is expected to accommodate unanticipated circumstances for both managers and staff. All other communications will be via TU Dublin email, TU Dublin Phone System, MS TEAMS (Telephony) and TEAMS chat as appropriate.

1. **Health, Safety & Welfare.**

The university recognises that the relevant health and safety regulations and employment legislation apply whether you are working on campus or working remotely. Within this agreement, you are reminded of your individual responsibility to ensure that you are not working in a hazardous environment which would put you and others at risk whilst working at home during this arrangement e.g. loose cables, electrical faults.

In order to support you, it is recommended that you undertake on-line training programme called *Home Working[[2]](#footnote-2)*. This course is designed to provide home workers with the appropriate information and training to complement health and safety measures and requirements when working from home. You should contact the Staff Development Office to enroll.

Furthermore, in order to ensure you are aware of appropriate working conditions, please use the following checklist and make the appropriate adjustments if possible to align.

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| --- |
| **Remote Work Checklist (to be completed with your manager)** |
| **Question for employee** | **Yes/No/Comment** |
| Do you have a keyboard, mouse and separate monitor or docking station connected to your laptop? |  |
| Do you have your screen raised to the correct height? i.e. when you look straight ahead, your eyes should be in or around the top of the screen. |  |
| Do you take regular short breaks from sitting by standing up and moving about for 1-2 minutes every thirty minutes? Change position every 20 minutes.  |  |
| Do you have a chair that is adjustable in height? |  |
| Do you have a chair that has a back rest that is adjustable in height and tilt? |  |
| Do you have a chair that supports your back? (For example a back rest or cushion)? |  |
| Is there enough space to allow you to work without twisting, bending or sitting/standing awkwardly? |  |
| Is there adequate light, ventilation and heat to allow you to work comfortably? |  |
| Is there enough workspace to accommodate the equipment or other materials needed for the activity? |  |
| Is the floor clear and dry, e.g., kept clear of electrical cables or anything else you could trip over / slip on? |  |
| Is the workspace free of clutter? |  |
| Are electrical sockets, plugs and cords in good condition e.g. no charring, exposed wiring or frayed cables? |  |

If having completed this checklist with your manager, you have any residual safety concerns regarding working from home, appropriate measures will be discussed. Virtual ergonomic risk assessments will be carried out on request, with priority given to employees who have reported musculoskeletal discomfort; vulnerable workers; those with disabilities; and sensitive risk workers. This will be completed by video calls or through the use of other technology platforms as they emerge.

The virtual ergonomic risk assessment will take account of the following:

* posture, level of intensity of keyboard/mouse work, freedom of movement
* information on the general environment at the workspace including set-up of the equipment and the lighting environment including potential sources of glare and
* information on the nature of your work at the computer.

The assessor performing the virtual ergonomic risk assessment will record any specific issues identified at your home workspace and agree on corrective actions with you. These actions will then be forwarded to your line manager for sign off and implementation.

1. **Policy position on equipment**

Appropriate equipment will be provided by the university as far as is reasonably possible. Whilst the university has identified a standard agile working ICT package, a range of options is in place depending on the nature of your role. Details of approved ICT equipment[[3]](#footnote-3) required to enable remote working is provided in Appendix 1. Where arrangements are not already in place line manager approval is required.

The challenges of a suitable agile working environment are acknowledged and additional equipment such as desks or printers will *not* be provided by the university. Staff who have not already done so, can request to retrieve their chair and monitors as they continue to work from home full time*.* The more specialised chair should be housed in the location most used in accordance with the agreed work pattern.

*“Movement of university property to homes must be pre-approved and effected on an exceptional basis only. An Application for the temporary removal of assets will be considered following the completion of a Risk Assessment. The line manager is responsible for maintaining a list of the university property moved, and ensuring it is returned in due course. Please refer to COVID-19 Temporary Removal of Assets on an Exceptional basis-Request Form”* (Extract from MTNWW)

Alternatively, if it is determined by the virtual ergonomic risk assessment (as outlined above) and receipt of a supporting medical certificate from a medical consultant/doctor/physiotherapist, that a specific chair is required, your manager will arrange to purchase one in accordance with normal purchasing procedures. This purchase is costed to the Function as normal and included in the asset register as appropriate.

Where Broadband is not available or suitable, staff may be expected to purchase a WIFI solution or alternatively they can return to work on campus.

Staff are reminded that “*It is open to employees to make claims directly from Revenue in respect of actual costs incurred in working from home at the end of the relevant tax year, in accordance with the relevant tax laws. Any claim in this regard is solely a matter for the individual concerned*”[[4]](#footnote-4).

[https://www.revenue.ie/en/tax-professionals/tdm/income-tax-capital-gains-tax-corporation-tax/part-05/05-02-13.pdf](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.revenue.ie%2Fen%2Ftax-professionals%2Ftdm%2Fincome-tax-capital-gains-tax-corporation-tax%2Fpart-05%2F05-02-13.pdf&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cd654865b3cc54579362308d89610473f%7C766317cbe9484e5f8cecdabc8e2fd5da%7C0%7C0%7C637424343943141396%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ICKVRErv8MRswNev4WBgT1A2c89bgdgj8VMrRla%2FtyI%3D&reserved=0)

Remote printing should be limited to ensure compliance with GDPR, IT Security. On campus, printing is available for large print jobs.

Where personally owned devices are used for TU Dublin work, access to University’s resources will be managed via TU Dublin IT Security policies and procedures and approved for use by ICT services.

Staff members are required to complete on line IT Security Training. You should contact the Staff Development Office to enroll.

1. **University policies and procedures.**

While working from home, staff will be required to continue to comply with all university policies in the normal way and in particular to the following

* GDPR: staff are accountable for ensuring the security of TU Dublin information and data and must be mindful of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the security and confidentiality of paper based records;
* IT Security and Usage policies: IT policies [*https://www.tudublin.ie/connect/it-services/it-policies*](https://www.tudublin.ie/connect/it-services/it-policies) apply to both on and off campus. Staff are responsible for ensuring full compliance with TU Dublin Acceptable Usage Policy, TU Dublin Information Security Policy and TU Dublin Password Policy when working from home;
* Time and Attendance: holiday, sick leave and any other leave of absence must be recorded appropriately on CoreHR or otherwise;
* Sickness Absence: Submission of Certified sickness certificates as normal, directly to your line manager if you are in the city campus, and to the HR Manager if you are in the Blanchardstown or Tallaght campus locations;
* Dignity and Respect at Work;
* The Code of Conduct for Employees;
* Health and safety policies and
* Working from home does not alter the cover provided by the university’s insurance (which is limited to legal liability which arises from an incident which occurred as a result of TU Dublin’s negligence).

*Note: The Agile Working Agreement will be sent to staff within an online process by the relevant manager. The online form is to be completed by the staff member following discussion with the manager*.

**Agile Working Agreement**

**Staff Name: Staff Number:**

**Managers Name: Managers Email Address:**

**A. Work Pattern** (For PMSS staff only in the acknowledgement that lecturing staff manage their work pattern in alignment with timetabled hours)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Indicate the days you will be working remotely** | **While working remotely, indicate the working hours to be agreed if these are outside of the standard day (for PMSS staff only)** | **Indicate the days you will be working at TU Dublin location** |
| Monday |  |  |  |
| Tuesday |  |  |  |
| Wednesday |  |  |  |
| Thursday |  |  |  |
| Friday |  |  |  |
| Saturday  |  |  |  |

**B. Work Plans and Deliverables: Special/alternative duties assigned to facilitate remote working to be summarised and included on the online form:**

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|  |

**C. Communication, Team meetings and contact times to be summarised and included on the online form:**

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|  |

**D. Health, Safety & Welfare. See Appendix 2.**

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Tick box** |
| Remote Checklist completed  |  |
| *Home Working* online Training module agreed/completed |  |
| Virtual Ergonomic Risk Assessment requested |  |

**E. Equipment is provided on the agreement that all devices and equipment remain the property of the University. See Appendix 1.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Tick box** |
| Standard ICT AGILE Working Package (Please note the models specified may change) |  |
| Other IT and AV equipment, approved by ICT Services  |  |
| Personally owned device approved for use by ICT Services |  |
| Additional monitors (e,g,24”to 27”) (to facilitate on screen working) |  |
| Other equipment (provide details)  |  |
| ICT Security Training agreed/completed |  |

**F. Agreement to comply with all university policies and procedures while working remotely**

**G. Review Date of agreement**

**H. Declaration**

I confirm that I have agreed the arrangements as set out above, and that I understand the conditions, and my responsibility in relation to the agile working arrangements and the training required. I accept that TU Dublin at all times reserves the right to modify or terminate any Agile Working Agreement taking account of factors including, but not limited to, Government Guidelines, TU Dublin’s current and future operational, organisational and human resources requirements. Otherwise changes to this agreement will be carried out following the agreed review date.

Tick box to agree

**Appendix 1. IT Hardware**

Windows devices (Please note the Dell models specified may change)

**MAC Devices**

Specifications of Mac Devices and associated Home / Work Office Package will be provided by

IT Services on request.

**Windows Laptops**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Standard Windows Laptop** Medium specification laptop, suitable for the vast majority of work requirements | **High-end Windows Laptop** A high specification laptop, suitable for hardware intensive software such as Adobe Cloud Premium suite, Visual Studio, AutoCAD, ProEng etc. | **2-in-1 laptop**A high specification 2-in-1 laptop |
| * Dell Latitude 5410
* Intel Core i5
* 16GB RAM
* 256 GB SSD
* 14.0" FHD (1920 x 1080)
* Carry case
 | * Dell Mobile Precision 7550
* Intel Core i7
* 16GB RAM
* 512GB SSD
* 15.6" FHD, (1920x1080)
* NVIDIA Quadro T1000 w/4GB GDDR6
* Dell Pro Briefcase
 | * Dell Latitude 7210 2-in-1
* Intel Core i7
* 16GB
* 512GB SSD
* 12.3" FHD (1920 x 1280) Touch
* Dell Pro Briefcase
* Dell Premium Active Pen
 |
| **Home / Work Office Package for all Windows Laptops**• Dell 24 Inch Monitor• Dell WD 19 Dock PSU 130W (Suitable for Dell 5410 & 7210)• Dell Performance Dock WD19DC, 240W (Suitable for Dell 7550)• USB Keyboard• USB optical 3 button mouse • USB-A wired headset with microphone |

**Appendix 2**

**Agile Working Agreement (AWA) Process**

The AWA helps managers to identify the key issues and arrangements that need to be discussed and agreed to facilitate staff working remotely during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Agreements will be individualised by nature and managers are encouraged to build in as much flexibility as possible to support staff while maintaining standards in relation to the agreed deliverables while working remotely.

The AWA provides a clear record which will benefit managers and staff and provides clarity in relation to flexibility, work patterns, deliverables, communication, team meetings and agreed contact times, health and safety and equipment. The agreement will include a built in review date so that managers and staff have an opportunity to modify the agreement to meet their needs if necessary.

Staff who can work from home will continue to work from home[[5]](#footnote-5) unless and until recommendations from the government change. Staff working from home under existing arrangements with their manager, are asked to review the ‘Agile Working Agreement’ document and are expected to have an Agile Working Agreement in place for the duration of the current working arrangements.

**Reaching Agreement**

1. Managers should ensure that staff who are working from home for some or all of their working week are aware of the Agile Working Agreement [LINK](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=yxdjdkjpX06M7Nq8ji_V2hzc8J1rByZGrf45XMGCwOBUNkRaSzNEWlcxUFo5U1hBR1NQVkhMN1FaOS4u) and the process by which agreement is reached.
2. In advance of asking staff to complete the online AWA form, managers should discuss expectations, understand any actions that need to be taken and seek general agreement about the following where relevant:
* **Work Patterns;** non-standard working hours when working remotely and/or days working on campus;
* **Work Plans and Deliverables;** How work objectives will be managed and staff supported, and any special/alternative duties that are assigned to facilitate remote working;
* **Communication, Team meetings and contact times;** particularly if staff are working remotely according to non-standard hours;
* **Health Safety and Welfare;** Managers and staff should pay particular attention to the requirement for staff to complete a Remote Work Checklist and to any resulting need for a virtual ergonomic risk assessment. Staff should be requested to enrol on the online health and safety training programme, *Home Working*.
* **Equipment;** Appropriate equipment will be provided by the university as far as is reasonably possible and should be agreed and identified as appropriate. If there is agreement for the use of personal owned devices, this must be approved by IT Services and will need to be addressed in advance of agreement. Please contact your local IT Services colleagues for assistance with the selection/quote process if required. To ensure compliance with procurement guidelines, a Business Case is required for non-standard IT equipment and items not available on the framework tender. Please note that a business case is required for the purchase of non-standard IT equipment.
* **University Policies and Procedures:** Managers should discuss the process and responsibility for recording holiday, sick leave and any other leave of absence appropriately on CoreHR or otherwise. While working remotely, arrangements should be clear as to how staff members submit certified sickness certificates to their line manager. During discussion on this section, managers should identify any training requirements and should provide full details in relation to supporting processes.
1. Each manager[[6]](#footnote-6)or their nominee will send the Agile Working Agreement via email to individual staff members inviting them to a meeting to discuss the arrangements and following that meeting the staff member will complete the AWA online form. The form needs to be returned to the individual manager.
2. On receipt of the completed AWA form, managers should review the details to ensure it is a) complete and b) consistent with their understanding of what was discussed. Any disputed issues should be reconciled with the staff member. A new form may need to be completed and agreed in this instance.
3. The following actions should be completed as necessary:
	* Virtual ergonomic risk assessment arranged. If it is determined by the virtual ergonomic risk assessment and receipt of a supporting medical certificate from a medical consultant/doctor/physiotherapist, that a specific chair is required by a staff member, managers will arrange to purchase one in accordance with normal purchasing procedures. This purchase is costed to the Function as normal and included in the asset register as appropriate
	* Arrangements for the purchase or otherwise of ICT equipment
	* Where managers approve the temporary removal of chairs for example, managers should maintain and update a list of the university property moved by their staff members, and ensuring it is returned in due course. Please refer to COVID-19 Temporary Removal of Assets on an Exceptional basis-Request Form. (Extract from MTNWW)
4. Managers are responsible for storing all completed AWA forms securely and for deleting all AWA forms after the current agile working arrangement has ceased. Further information on the University’s Data Protection Policies and Procedures are available [here](https://tudublin.ie/explore/gdpr/)

**Agile Working Agreement Process Flow**

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**Online Form questions**

Q1 Name (First name, Surname):

Q2 Staff Number:

Q3 Managers Name:

Q4 Managers email address:

Q5 Please state the days you are working remotely (for PMSS staff only):

Q6 When working remotely as set out above, please give details if you are working a non- standard day. (for PMSS staff only):

Q7Special/alternative duties assigned to facilitate remote working to be summarised:

Q8 Communication, Team meetings and contact times to be summarised:

Q9 Health, Safety & Welfare - Please ensure the following are completed

* Remote Work Checklist completed
* Home Working On-line Training Module
* Virtual ergonomic risk assessment requested

Q10 Equipment is provided on the agreement that all devices and equipment remain the property of the University. Please outline what equipment is agreed and confirm that training is complete.

|  |
| --- |
| Standard ICT AGILE Working Package (Please note the models specified may change) |
| Other IT and AV equipment, approved by ICT Services  |
| Personally owned device approved for use by ICT Services |
| Additional monitors (e,g,24”to 27”) (to facilitate on screen working) |
| Other equipment (provide details) |
| ICT Security Training agreed/completed |

Q11 Agreement to comply with all University policies while working remotely:

Q12 Declaration – tick box:

Q13 Review Date of Agreement:

|  |
| --- |
| **Version Control** |
| **Document Version** | **Approved by** | **Amendments/additions**  | **Date** |
| Agile Working Protocol, submitted to RMT 12/10/20 | Recommended for approval | N/A |  |
| Agile Working Agreement (3/11/2020)  | Approved by Presidents Group |  | 5 November 2020 |
| Agile Working Agreement (9/11/20) | N/A  | Inclusion of Appendix 2.  | 9 November 2020 |
| Agile Working Agreement (1/12/20) | Social Partners  | Minor  | 1 December 2020 |
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1. *The agile working principles are intended to underpin the development of an Agile Working Policy for the university in the future.(MTNWW page 32)* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Home working is available on all campus locations* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *This list will be updated in line with product roadmaps and future Framework Agreements* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Page 25 of the Guidance for Public Service Employers during COVID-19 dated 15 May 2020* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *The Roadmap for reopening of society and business, launched 1 May 2020* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Normally the manager who approves annual leave/signs off on CoreTime* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)