

2021/22 Hybrid Workplace Pilot Program

The Hybrid Workplace Pilot program is intended to explore the concept of a hybrid work arrangements for staff and academic support faculty members selected for participation in the pilot, providing the ability to work both on Campus and from a remote location.

The pilot is intended to produce the following outcomes:

- Provide an opportunity for staff and academic support faculty to explore the benefits of working both from home and on campus (hybrid workplace)
- Identify opportunities to enhance or improve service offerings to students
- Enable departments to explore key considerations related to remote work for staff and academic support faculty
- Identify both opportunities and barriers related to hybrid work arrangements
- Explore and measure the impact on environmental sustainability, productivity and employee engagement
- Inform the development of a Hybrid or Remote Work Policy
- Ensure that UFV continues to have a vibrant Campus for students, staff and faculty – and that workplace flexibility enhances our culture

The 2021-22 Hybrid Workplace Program does not include the option to only work only from a remote work location. Because of the significant impact on departmental operations, applications for participation in the pilot are made on a departmental basis.

This pilot does not alter or replace the existing terms and conditions of employment. All UFV policies, procedures and provisions outlined within the Collective Agreement apply as if the pilot participants were on Campus.

The University will determine suitability of work and positions identified for pilot participation and retains sole discretion over approvals. The number of pilot participants will be limited. As all pilot participants will be issued a laptop computer and headset compatible with soft phone technology, participation in the pilot will be limited.

Eligibility

All of the pilot participants are required to work on campus for a portion of their work duties. The schedule of on and off-site duties will be agreed to in advance – the schedule may only be altered by mutual consent.

1. Pilot participants must agree to comply with the requirements outlined within this document.
2. The 2021-22 Hybrid Workplace Pilot is limited to individuals who have passed their initial probationary period and those with a positive performance evaluation with no disciplinary issues identified within the past two years.

Application and Approval Process

All departments applying for the 2021-22 Hybrid Workplace Pilot must be put forward by the excluded manager for the area. The University will select pilot participants based on the application criteria.

The pilot will commence September 2021 and will end on July 31, 2022.

1. Approval is at the sole discretion of the University and will prioritize operational need.
2. The hybrid work arrangements are formally reviewed after the first two months and are subsequently reviewed every three months thereafter.
3. Participants in the pilot program understand and acknowledge that the arrangement can be discontinued by the University or the employee at any time, with one week's advance notice.
4. The remote work location must be within British Columbia, preferably the lower mainland. The location must be confirmed at the time of the pilot. Participants will be scheduled to work onsite, on a weekly basis.
5. Pilot participants understand that they may be required to attend meetings, training or other events on campus with reasonable notice.
6. Pilot participants understand and acknowledge that they may/will be required to share an on-campus work space with other pilot participants. This will enable the University to also explore space savings opportunities which may be beneficial as a result of the pilot. This kind of arrangement is often referred to as hotelling, whereby two or more people share an onsite desk/computer, coordinating their use of the space.

Office Equipment and Expenses

Participants of the Hybrid Workplace Pilot accept and acknowledge that they are responsible for costs associated with the setup of their workspace, office furniture, lighting or repairs.

1. Pilot participants are responsible for costs related to their home office set-up. The remote workplace is to be organized for safe and efficient work. Pilot participants agree to establish an appropriate workspace free from distractions.
2. Participants are required to have a sufficient Internet connection. Funding to offset this cost is limited to the current Development and Training allocation, currently provided to all permanent employees.
3. Participants will use soft phone technology, accessed through a UFV laptop computer, therefore personal cellphones will not be provided as part of the remote work pilot.

4. Pilot participants accept and acknowledge that there is no reimbursement for travel from the remote work location to attend a UFV campus location. This is consistent with the working conditions for all UFV employees.
5. Pilot participants will conduct UFV work duties using a computer supplied and maintained by the University, subject to all applicable rules, policies including software to maintain data security and confidentiality.
6. Pilot participants will get their remote office supplies from their department, and when necessary through the approved purchasing process established. Office supplies purchased that do not use the approved UFV process will not be reimbursed.

Health and Safety

UFV is responsible for ensuring that safety guidelines and procedures exist at all work locations, including remote work sites. Employees are covered by WorkSafeBC for job-related injuries that occur in the course of employment within this designated workspace and during the remote work schedule. The University is not responsible for any injuries at the remote work location that are not work-related. Employees are liable for any injuries to third parties that occur on their premises.

Employer representatives, accompanied by an JOHS Committee member, may make onsite visits at an agreed time to ensure that the workspace is safe and free from hazards.

Employees participating in the Hybrid Workplace Pilot program are responsible for the following:

1. Maintaining a designated and dedicated workspace that is safely maintained, free from hazards and that meets occupational safety standards for workplaces and office ergonomics.
2. Complying with all safe work procedures. This includes complying with operational requirements of the Working Alone or in Isolation program (where identified as working within the scope of this program).
3. Establishing, and providing to their employer, protocols for emergencies including evacuation procedures and emergency contacts.
4. Reporting all work-related injuries, incidents, or accidents to their supervisor as soon as practicable.
5. Reporting unsafe conditions or hazards to your supervisor immediately and resolving unsafe conditions or hazards and reporting the resolution to your supervisor.
6. Completing and submitting a safety checklist, which may include images, and reviewing with a supervisor/manager before the remote work arrangement can proceed and on a routine basis following the initial assessment.

Work Expectations and Performance

It is essential that participants continue to perform their duties in a manner consistent with individuals working on Campus.

1. Pilot participants agree to regular communications, including video meetings whereby video cameras are turned on and are expected to be available by telephone, email and any other electronic means as if working at the regular workplace. Individuals must keep supervisor aware of any time they might be unavailable, as per usual.
2. Participants agree to keep their manager or supervisor advised of work progress, as per usual.
3. Pilot participants must stay current with relevant work issues as they would if attending the regular workplace. The Remote Work Pilot must not impede employee's ability to complete regular work functions and duties, including communication.
4. The University retains the ability to evaluate and adjust work arrangements to meet operational needs with the highest priority placed on meeting the needs of students and operational outcomes.
5. Evaluation of work performance is to be consistent with those employees on Campus. Supervisors/managers retain the ability to evaluate and adjust work arrangements to meet operational needs
6. The remote work location must be free from distractions.

Hours of Work

The hours of work for pilot participants will be unchanged from their regular hours of work unless otherwise specified in writing.

1. Any overtime worked must be pre-approved using existing internal processes.
2. Approvals for and the scheduling of leaves is to continue as normal. For example, instances whereby the employee must leave the remote work location for personal business is to be requested, approved and scheduled in the same manner as employees working on Campus.

Privacy, FOIPA and related Data Security

Pilot participants continue to be bound by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FIPPA") and must take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of data and personal information accessible from the remote location. In addition, participants must make themselves familiar with and abide by UFV's Appropriate Use of Computing and Network Resources policy, in particular the section on 'Working Away from the Office' (the "Appropriate Use Policy"). For ease of reference, sections 12-20 of the Appropriate Use Policy are reproduced below:

Working Away from the Office

Faculty and staff must have authorization from their department head or supervisor before accessing sensitive information from remote work locations. “Sensitive Information” includes (a) personal information (as defined in FIPPA) pertaining to students or staff or other individuals (i.e., student records, educational records, staff employment files, etc.) and (b) confidential information of or about the University its business, operations, programs or plans that is not generally known, used or available to the public.

To the extent practicable, access to and use of Sensitive Information when working remotely should take place via secure virtual private network, rather than storing such information locally on Mobile Devices or Personal Devices.

Faculty and staff should avoid accessing or viewing Sensitive Information except via secure wireless networks. Public networks are not secure.

Faculty and staff who use home computers or personally-owned devices (“Personal Devices”) to store or access Sensitive Information must ensure that access to the Sensitive Information is not provided to any other users of such Personal Devices.

Faculty and staff must not use personal email accounts for University business, including, but not limited to the storage, transmission or disclosure of Sensitive Information.

The University is subject FIPPA which permits members of the public to request records within its custody and control. Staff and employees who store University files or data on Personal Devices (including via text message, video footage, personal email accounts) may be required to provide copies of such records to the University.

In addition, pilot participants acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. Pilot participants are issued a UFV computer for their business use and acknowledge and accept that they must follow all data security guidelines, policies and procedures established by the University.
2. All documents must be saved on the employer’s system so the information can be available to other employees that may require access.
3. Telephone calls and video conference calls involving personal information, confidential information, employment or other sensitive matters must be conducted in private and unable to be heard by others.
4. Pilot participants must obtain approval prior to removing any physical files from the employer’s worksite
5. Pilot participants are required to use soft phone technology and will be issue a specialized headset to be used with the technology.

Pilot Program End Date – July 31, 2022

The Hybrid Workplace Pilot program will end on July 31, 2022, unless renewed by the University. On August 2, 2022 participants will resume their work at the previous Campus location.

Pilot participants and managers will be asked to participate in surveys during the pilot, to assist the University in learning about their experience, to shape a longer-term Policy or program.

Participants of the pilot program should not expect the plan to continue beyond the current pilot program – any adjustments to their personal residence should be made with this reality in mind.