**Policy**

**Category:**

**Name:** Working at Home Policy

**Approval:** Senior Management Team

**Responsibility:** VPED

**Dates:**
- **Approved:** 01/09/2020.
- **Last Revised:** 20/03/2020.

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**Definitions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BISC</td>
<td>Bader International Study Centre &amp; Herstmonceux Castle Enterprises Limited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeworking</td>
<td>Working away from the main BISC business base.</td>
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</table>

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define what is meant by homeworking
- Confirm the procedure for making a homeworking application
- Define the responsibilities associated with homeworking
- Adopt a consistent approach to homeworking throughout the BISC
- Comply with relevant legislation

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**Scope:**

This policy applies to all BISC staff and faculty who wish to make an application for a home working arrangement via the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.

Any reference in this policy to a “home worker” is any individual who makes a successful application for a home working arrangement under the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.

This policy is non-contractual and may be withdrawn, updated, or amended at any time.

For the purposes of this policy, all references to BISC applies equally to HCE and the term staff refers to all staff and faculty employed by BISC or HCE.
Working at Home Policy

Policy:

Introduction
Homeworking involves an employee working away from the BISC main site for all or part of their working week.

BISC contractual terms, duties, responsibilities, policies, and procedures apply to all employees, including those working at home.

Working at home is subject to the business needs of the BISC and is not an automatic or contractual right.

This policy does not envisage home, or remote, working from outside the UK. Requests to perform role-related duties and work either partly or wholly outside of the United Kingdom will not be allowed other than in exceptional circumstances. This is due to the potential significant tax compliance risk and cost implications to the BISC and/or the individual. Requests which are thought to be exceptional must be discussed with your Line Manager in the first instance and will require the approval of the Director of Finance & Assets before any overseas working agreement is implemented.

Background
Throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic, a greater proportion of roles at the BISC have been successfully performed by individuals undertaking some or all of their work at home (remote working). This Working at Home Policy sets out to further promote and encourage the practice of home working as allowed by an individual’s role, team/departmental requirements, personal circumstances, and preferences. We want BISC to be a great place to work and the Working at Home Policy builds on more staff having a wider range of flexible working options. Like many of our longer-term strategic ambitions, these are changes that won’t happen overnight, but this Policy sets out a clear vision of what we want to be like as a place to work, an inclusive employer who invests in its people and can allow a better work/life balance. This Policy shows our commitment to support home working where possible, whilst ensuring the efficient and effective running of the BISC and the research and education we provide our students.

This policy provides information and guidance on the following areas of homeworking:

- Definition of homeworking
- Hours of work
- On-site attendance
- Equipment and workstation
- Expenses
- Reporting and other requirements
- Illness or injury
- Insurance and property restrictions
- Security and data protection
- Health and safety
- Access to home working locations
POLICY

- Accessibility, collaboration, and inclusion
- Responsibilities within the BISC for the management of homeworking arrangements
- Applying to work from home
- Suitability for home working
- Place of work
- Exceptional Circumstances
- The right to withdraw home working privilege

Definition of homeworking
Homeworking is a type of flexible working arrangement whereby, depending on the agreement between employer and employee, an employee may work at home for the period agreed.

Hours of work
All homeworkers must undertake their work within their usual working hours, unless directed to do otherwise by their line manager. If a homeworker needs to agree alternative working hours, they should discuss this with their manager as soon as possible or make a flexible working request (as detailed below).

Home workers must ensure that they take adequate breaks and move around often, ideally at least every hour. In addition, as a minimum, they should take:

- A break of 20 minutes after every six hours worked;
- A daily rest break of at least 11 hours; and
- At least one 24-hour break per week.

On-site attendance
There may be occasions when a homeworker will be required to attend, or work from the BISC’s offices on days they intended to work from home e.g., for the purposes of attending meetings, delivering lectures, briefings, or training. In addition, a homeworker may be required, on reasonable notice by the employer, to work from the BISC during key points of a business cycle, to deputise for absent colleagues or in other relevant circumstances.

Equipment and workstation
The BISC is not looking to duplicate the expense of providing two sets of IT to homeworkers (one for at home and one on the BISC’s site). Home workers may be expected to use the same computer equipment provided to them when working on-site and when working from home, e.g., a laptop and should be prepared to travel to and from the BISC premises with this equipment.

The BISC will provide home workers with the following equipment:

- All necessary basic computer equipment, e.g., a laptop. You will need to collect this from the IT department where full instructions on how to assemble and install will be provided.
- The IT department will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of such equipment and all such repairs will take place on the BISC’s premises. It is the homeworkers responsibility to return the equipment to the BISC to be repaired.
- A document shredder, where the BISC considers one is required due to the nature of the documentation being handled.
All equipment provided always remains BISC property. Where BISC has provided equipment to a homeworker to facilitate working at home, all such equipment will have undergone Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) to ensure it is safe to use. It is a condition of working from home that employees will need to have a suitable place to work and an appropriate and safe workstation that satisfies Health & Safety criteria.

Where the BISC have provided equipment, the homeworker must:

- Ensure the equipment is not used by others in the household
- Take reasonable care of the equipment.
- Use it only for the purposes for which it was provided.
- Make it available to the BISC for inspection at any time if the BISC request them to do so and return the equipment to BISC on the termination of their employment.
- Not upload any apps or download any documentation from any hard drive or other device unless approved by the IT department.
- Not use the equipment for anything other than BISC business and work.
- Not permit any member of their family or any third party to use the equipment; and
- Promptly report any damage to or malfunctioning of any item to their line manager.

The BISC will maintain the equipment, but the homeworker will be responsible for any damage to the equipment that goes beyond reasonable wear and tear.

If an IT issue or other equipment problem prevents the homeworker from working remotely effectively, they must contact their line manager as soon as possible and are expected to attend the office on days they were meant to be working from home, until the problem is fixed.

A homeworker will need to ensure that they have appropriate security in place in their home to always ensure the protection of the BISC’s confidential materials and BISC property. No BISC confidential materials or property should be left lying around in the homeworker’s home and all such material and property must be securely stored at all times when not being used. BISC IT reserve the right to install appropriate programs and apps to further GDPR compliance on any BISC devices used outside of BISC main site.

Homeworkers are required to have a reliable internet connection and phone signal (where applicable) to perform their roles. This is essential to permit effective communication with colleagues, students, and key stakeholders and the accessing of relevant information and systems that permit the effective performance of roles.

Any employee applying for a home working arrangement will be required to confirm in writing via the necessary home working forms that they have a suitable workplace/home office or other location available to them and agree if requested by BISC to prove this, provide relevant evidence of their homeworking environment and workstation.
Expenses
The BISC does not make financial contributions for any expenses associated with working at home such as heating, lighting, internet and phone lines, council tax costs electricity, broadband internet charges, telephone calls, printing, or any other miscellaneous household expenses. Homeworkers may be able to claim personal Income Tax relief for employment expenses incurred whilst working at home via the HMRC P87 form. If homeworkers wish to seek benefit from this tax relief, they should refer to the UK Government’s guide on claiming tax relief of job expenses at www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home. This is subject to HMRC’s terms for claiming tax relief over which the BISC has no control and for the avoidance of doubt, in the event that homeworkers are not able to claim tax relief, the BISC will not be responsible for any expenses incurred as a result of working at home. Nothing in this paragraph should be read as advice and homeworkers are advised to take their own personal tax advice on the same if they wish.

Homeworkers will not be reimbursed for travel to and from campus and/or their remote workplace.

Reporting and other requirements
Homeworkers are expected to report to their line manager regularly on days when they are working from home.

All normal workplace rules, code of conduct and procedures apply while homeworkers are working remotely, although some administrative processes may change to accommodate homeworking arrangements, in which case the homeworker will be notified.

Contractual obligations and BISC policies apply whether working on or off campus and all employees are required to comply with all BISC policies and procedures, including but not limited to, data protection, the BISC IT policy and BISC mobile devices policy, holiday, sickness etc. whether working at home or from a BISC workplace.

Illness or injury
If a homeworker cannot work on a day on which it has been agreed that they will work from home because they are ill or injured, they must follow the procedure set out in the BISC Employee Handbook to report their absence.

Insurance and property restrictions
The BISC holds liability insurance that provides cover for legal liabilities of the BISC and its members of staff whenever they are engaged in BISC business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

All BISC property provided for use by homeworkers will be covered under the BISC insurance policy. Where homeworkers are provided with BISC property to use at home, they must not cause or permit any act or omission which will avoid coverage under the BISC insurance policy. All individuals are responsible for the security of the BISC’s property within their control, including the protection of confidential information and for avoiding loss. All those working at home must ensure reasonable steps are taken to ensure the care, custody, and security of BISC owned assets within their control. If in any doubt as to whether acts or omissions will affect the care, custody or control of BISC owned assets then homeworkers should consult their line manager immediately.
Homeworkers are responsible for assessing the personal implications of home working in respect of their home insurance, taxation, mortgage, utilities provision and any leasing and landlord agreements.

Homeworkers should notify their home and household contents insurer of their homeworking arrangements. They are responsible for ensuring that their homeworking arrangements do not breach any insurance policy condition or any lease or mortgage condition, restrictive covenant, or local authority planning restriction.

**Security and data protection**
BISC is committed to enabling and facilitating effective home working via its IT solutions. Homeworkers are responsible for ensuring the security of all BISC equipment, documents, and information while they are working remotely. Homeworkers must take all necessary steps to ensure that private and confidential material is always stored securely to ensure information security and adherence to data protection legislation. BISC IT reserve the right to install appropriate programs and apps to further GDPR compliance on any BISC devices used outside of BISC main site.

Specifically, homeworkers must:

- Use the BISC remote login or Office 365 under BISC licenses, to access and save files to relevant shared directories.
- Not save BISC work onto their home devices.
- Screen lock their computer whenever it is left unattended.
- Store confidential papers securely when not in use.
- Ensure the secure disposal of confidential materials.
- Comply with the all BISC IT policies; and
- Report any data security breach or theft of BISC equipment to their Head of Department immediately.

**Health and safety**
Any policies relating to the Health and Safety, or wellbeing of staff and faculty apply equally to homeworkers.

Homeworkers have the same health and safety duties as other workers. They are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety while working remotely and must follow all health and safety instructions issued by BISC.

The BISC also has certain obligations under health and safety legislation which may require it on occasion to perform a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by a homeworker. The purpose of completing a risk assessment is to identify the hazards relating to the homeworker’s work activities and to decide whether sufficient steps have been taken to prevent harm to the homeworker or anyone else who may be affected by their work.

A risk assessment will be carried out before any home working arrangement is agreed to ensure suitability of a home working arrangement.
Risk assessments in relation to the working environment of a homeworker will, depending on what approach is viewed as most appropriate by the BISC, be carried out:

- By the homeworker, on a self-assessment basis using the BISC checklist of home environment and the screen display equipment checklist OR
- By another employee or contractor on the BISC's behalf (and, to facilitate this, the homeworker is required to provide access to their home to the extent described above).

Where self-assessments are required, homeworkers will be provided with appropriate risk assessment training and advice and are expected to cooperate fully in training for and undertaking the assessment.

All Home working environments must be:

- Safe and secure
- Adequate in terms of space, lighting, layout, and conditions
- Appropriate to the nature of the work being conducted and free of distractions; home working is not a substitute for suitable care arrangements for dependents or pets; dependents or pets should be cared for by someone other than the member of staff during their working hours.

Carrying out computer or paper-based work at home is generally deemed low risk, however, to ensure staff have safe home working arrangements, homeworkers will be required to carry out relevant assessments by the BISC, including but not limited to, Checklist of Home environment and Display Screen Equipment Checklist (DSE). If homeworkers work with display screen equipment, the BISC will ensure that the equipment is safe and fit for use. Homeworkers will be provided with advice on how to use it safely, including information on breaks from work. Staff using DSE are entitled to eye tests paid for by the BISC, in line with standard guidelines for other employees.

All risk assessment findings will be recorded and reviewed as appropriate.

For the homeworker’s own security, it is also recommended that homeworkers should:

- Not release personal data or information such as home address or personal telephone number to external contacts, colleagues, or students,
- Use IT approved technology, as outlined in this Policy, and
- Ensure that colleagues are aware of the homeworkers whereabouts and how to contact them.

Necessary meetings should take place virtually, by phone, or face to face on BISC premises where possible. For reasons of personal security, face to face work meetings at individuals’ homes are not permitted, unless approved in advance by the relevant line manager and relevant safety assessments have been conducted.

Any accident at home (or the place where you are working remotely) must be reported to the homeworker’s line manager.
Homeworkers should report any health and safety concerns to their line manager, as soon as possible.

Homeworkers who become pregnant, develop an injury or illness, or change address should notify their line manager of their changed circumstances as soon as possible, so a new and/or specific risk assessment can be conducted.

Whilst there are many benefits to home working, there are also challenges staff and managers should remain vigilant to. At times, homeworkers could feel more isolated, may experience boundaries between work and personal life becoming blurred or find they are more sedentary. The BISC encourages individuals to take steps to ensure healthy home working. Homeworkers should contact their manager if they have any such concerns. More information on good home working practices can be found on the Queen’s BISC Webpages.

Where homeworkers work alone, details of the additional safety and other provisions that apply are set out in the BISC’s Lone Working Guidelines.

As the owner and/or occupier of their property, homeworkers remain responsible for ensuring the safety of any visitors to their premises, as well as any other family members, particularly children, and that the general fabric of the home and its fixtures and fittings, including in any area in which they work, are maintained in a safe and functional state for performance of work there, e.g., electrical sockets.

**Access to home working locations**

By choosing to work at home, homeworkers consent to the BISC or its representatives, at reasonable times and on reasonable notice, accessing their home workplace. The BISC will only do so where it deems it absolutely necessary, and where there are not suitable alternative methods of achieving the required outcomes. There may be, on occasions however when the BISC to need to access a staff member’s remote working location. This could be to:

- Inspect or investigate significant health and safety concerns

**Accessibility, collaboration, and inclusion**

Virtual accessibility is an important aspect of effective home working, for both the homeworker and those with whom they work. Homeworkers should remain ‘visible’ and ‘accessible’, letting others know where and when they are working, within BISC core hours, and how they can be reached, whether working on or off campus.

Email signature strips, shared calendars, schedules, intranet staff profiles, are just some of the methods of promoting accessibility.

Homeworkers must be aware of the tasks allocated by their line manager and the timescales for completion.
POLICY

Homeworkers should remain as engaged and involved with the BISC as campus workers. The BISC will provide equal access to relevant information and opportunities, such as news, meetings, and events and development and promotion opportunities so as not to disadvantage a particular category of worker.

All homeworkers should utilise the suite of available and relevant BISC recommended equipment and technology to engage effectively with colleagues and other stakeholders in home working scenarios.

Training will take place as appropriate and required. Homeworkers will be expected to participate in any departmental or general training sessions, and to attend in person if the training cannot be provided online.

Homeworkers should ensure they present themselves professionally, including dressing smartly, in online meetings with colleagues, students or external contacts.

Homeworkers should clearly state in their work email logos what days they are on-site.

Line Manager Responsibilities
The line manager must ensure that:

- The homeworking role is one which is suitable for homeworking, e.g., it is not one which requires specialist equipment or can only be performed on the BISC site.
- A Health & Safety assessment of the home working environment has been undertaken using the BISC Checklist of Home Environment form. The HSE Display Equipment Workstation Checklist and any other necessary forms as required from time to time.
- The homeworker has clearly defined tasks and is aware of the timescales.
- Homeworkers are included in team activities and teams are managed inclusively.
- Where appropriate, the substance of ad hoc discussions that take place in the workplace is relayed to those not present, so that they are not disadvantaged by not being present.
- They check in with the homeworker regularly.
- The homeworker has the correct equipment necessary to perform the allocated tasks.
- Where BISC provides equipment to the homeworker, all applicable PAT testing and workstation assessment has been undertaken.
- The homeworker is not deemed to be adversely affected by working at home in respect of their physical and mental health and to be alert to potential privacy issues relating to virtual meetings, e.g., homeworkers may not be happy to show their home as their background.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their team develops its own principles or protocol for effective communications, including:

- How often meetings should take place, and for what purpose.
- When it may be necessary for the team to meet physically, or in person.
- A suitable time and day for regular team meetings.
- Who is responsible e.g., for scheduling meetings, setting the agenda, leading the meeting and sending a summary and actions list.
Privacy settings, e.g., whether cameras should be on at all times, or for example only when a person is presenting, whether staff can use a background or blurring effect if they wish, and whether they should mute their microphones when they are not talking; and
- Where there are new joiners, considering whether additional team meetings and one-to-one meetings should be scheduled, including the opportunity to socialise and get to know the team.

Applying to work from home
The decision as to whether to allow homeworking in relation to an existing or new job given role rests with the Director of the business area. In relation to existing employees, a request for a permanent homeworking arrangement will constitute a statutory flexible working request and will be dealt with under the BISC’s Flexible Working Policy and Procedure. Please see the BISC’s Flexible Working Policy and Procedure for more details.

Suitability for homeworking
We know that working regularly in the workplace encourages effective collaboration with team members, peers and other functions and has a positive effect on wellbeing. We also understand that home working can provide staff with a better work/life balance, enhance productivity and performance, and help us to put our ‘physical’ time in the workplace to better use. While homeworking may be an attractive option, it will not suit everyone. A homeworker needs to be able to cope with working on their own with little supervision. Homeworkers need to:

- Be able to spend long periods on their own and be confident working without supervision.
- Be self-disciplined and self-motivated and able to use their initiative.
- Manage their workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines.
- Be able to separate work from home life.
- Be able to identify and resolve any new pressures created by working from a remote working location.
- Adapt to new working practices, including maintaining contact with their line manager and colleagues at work.
- Exercise flexibility to make changes on our reasonable request to the home working arrangement, including to the days, times, and location from which they work (as between their workplace and their agreed remote working location), to meet the needs of our business.
- Determine any resulting tax implications for themselves.
- Make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants or pets when they are working from their remote working location; and
- Finance any travel and/or related expenses incurred when travelling to and from their remote working location and their workplace.

In determining whether any given job role, existing or new, is suitable for homeworking, as well as the matters set out in the BISC’s Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, the Director may take into account any or all of the following:

- Whether it is a stand-alone role or one that requires continued or regular close co-operation with colleagues.
POLICY

- Whether the job role can be carried out effectively from a home or remote location.
- The effect, if any, on the ability to meet customer, student or client demands or expectations.
- The effect, if any, on the quality of work output and BISC and individual performance.
- Whether it is a supervisory or management role and, if so, whether it entails daily, or regular, face-to-face delegation and supervision.
- Whether the role requires daily, or regular, face-to-face supervision or management.
- How much attendance in the office is reasonably required.
- The revenue responsibility of the role, and the potential for adverse impact in this regard.
- The ratio of homeworkers to site-based workers in the relevant work group or department.
- Whether colleagues’ workflow will need to change to accommodate the role being carried out on a homeworking basis.
- Whether it is practical for the main functions of the role to be carried out from home, particularly in relation to administrative support roles.
- Whether there are any costs implications, including whether homeworking is in this instance affordable, and whether the likely costs to the BISC outweigh the benefits.
- Whether a suitable home or other remote working environment is available to the employee. In the event of a change of home address, the new home address must also meet these requirements.
- Whether the employee can take reasonable steps to ensure security of BISC equipment in their home.
- Whether the employee can guarantee confidentiality of information at home; and
- Whether the employee’s household/home insurance policy or any other relevant provision prohibits working from home; and
- The employee’s suitability for homeworking, e.g. self-motivation and discipline, ability to work without direct supervision and ability to keep separate their work and home lives.

Place of work

Any UK remote working location must be approved by the employee’s manager in advance. Employees must not work in public places (such as cafes) at any time, for security reasons.

An employee’s contractual place of work will be set out in their contract of employment.

If an employee submits and is successful in being granted flexible working using the BISC’s Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, the employee’s place of work will reflect the arrangement agreed. For example:

- If the employee works from home 50% of the time their place of work will be their home address and the BISC address for each period worked at home and at the BISC premises respectively. An employee can have two places of work.
- If an employee works certain days at home, their contract of employment will set out that their place of work is both their usual on-site place of work on certain days and at their home address for other stated days.

In both circumstances, where an employee’s home address changes, wherever possible, the employee must give the BISC not less than four weeks’ notice of the change. If the employee wishes to work from a different remote location, this must be agreed with the BISC in advance and that agreement must be given in writing.
Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, such as fire, flood, pandemic, or any other incident necessitating complete or partial shut-down of the BISC site, or where fewer employees are required to be physically on site than during normal day-to-day operations, the BISC will implement the following procedures:

- SMT will determine which core services/roles are required to operate as normal on the BISC site and what temporary arrangements are/may be needed
- Line Managers, in conjunction with the relevant SMT member, will determine which roles, outside of the core services determined above, are able to be homeworking for the temporary period. In such instances, the working at home policy will be followed considering any necessary temporary changes that may be needed to meet the needs of the reason imposed by the exceptional circumstances.
- Where the role is not deemed a core service required on site, or not able to be completed from home, the BISC may require staff to take annual leave and or unpaid leave. Where this situation occurs, notice will be given to the employee following all relevant UK legislation and any government guidelines on the same.

The decision of BISC shall be final.

The right to withdraw home working privilege

In relevant performance or disciplinary cases, an employee may no longer be permitted to work remotely.

Responsibilities:

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<th>Contact Officer(s):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Job title</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
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Date for Next Review: The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Policy Advisory Group.

Related Documents:


Superseded by: Provide names and links to any policies superseded by this policy.