

Working from Home - Professional and General Staff

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1. Introduction

This procedure outlines the necessary steps that must be followed in order to enable any regular and continuing working from home arrangement. It also outlines the minimum requirements for any irregular work undertaken from home. Following this guidance aims to ensure the University Health, Safety and Injury Management Policy (C - 6.4) is met.

Working from home is a formal work arrangement particularly suited to office-based duties, although not exclusively so. Working from home may also occur on an irregular basis and will not normally be used as a continuing arrangement. Working from home is not an appropriate substitute for dependent care.

Work Health and Safety requirements extend beyond the employer's place of business to include any place where the employer requires or permits an employee to perform work, including the employee's own home.

The manager and employee responsibilities for health and safety in a home-based work arrangement are the same as they are if work is conducted at the employer's workplace. Managers have a legal duty to ensure that their employees are safe from injury and risks to health whilst undertaking work on behalf of the University.

Employees must ensure they follow reasonable instruction, use any safety equipment provided, comply with UniSA policies and procedures, and conduct themselves in a manner whilst engaged in work which does not put themselves or others at risk of injury.

2. Definitions

Home-based work – a formal arrangement between the line manager and an employee for the employee to carry out some or all of their usual duties from home for a defined period of time.

Home-based worksite – an employee's usual place of residence and an area designated in the employee's residence which has been agreed between the line manager and the employee for use by the employee to perform home-based work.

Industrial Instrument – refers to the applicable Collective Agreement, Award, Australian Workplace Agreement, contract of employment or legislation.

Line Manager – a member of the Senior Management Group, Head of School, Director of Unit/Research Institute/Centre and Division Service Directors.

Supervisor – any employee to whom other employees report.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Line Managers should undertake the following:

- ensure careful consideration has been taken prior to approving a request from an employee to enter into a formal working from home arrangement
- ensure that decisions about which staff can work from home are equitable
- prepare in consultation with the employee, a formal agreed working from home arrangement prior to the commencement of the arrangement
- effectively manage employees who have been granted approval to engage in a working from home arrangement

- ensure all relevant documentation (WHS 52 - Working from Home Arrangement and WHS 29 - Safety & Ergonomic Self-Assessment) are completed and any issues rectified prior to the employee commencing work at the home-based site
- ensure that working from home documentation is filed appropriately at the local level and is made available for inspection as required
- regularly review working from home arrangements (on at least an annual basis, perhaps in conjunction with the employee's performance review).

Employees should:

- not place themselves or others at risk of injury in a home working environment
- complete WHS 29 - Safety & Ergonomic Self-Assessment of the home-based work area and assist with rectifying non-compliance matters
- report to and consult with line managers and/or supervisors in relation to any issues related to working at home (including health and safety matters).

4. Procedure

4.1 Working from home on a regular basis

This applies to situations where there is formal approval for an employee to engage in a regular working from home arrangement.

The arrangement must include agreement of the formal commencement and cessation dates and a record of the days and/or hours in which the work shall be performed at the home-based worksite. It should also include such matters as communication arrangements, levels of supervision, duties to be performed, equipment and furniture requirements and health and safety and security arrangements.

The terms of an employee's arrangement will not set a precedent for use as the basis of another employee's arrangement or any future requests to work from home.

Who can work from home?

A regular working from home arrangement should only be considered in rare circumstances and have regard to the following:

- the operational requirements of the workplace
- whether the nature of the employee's role and current work is suitable to be performed from home.

Positions suitable for working from home will generally have the following characteristics:

- the position is not in a supervisory role
- the position does not require a high degree of supervision or close scrutiny
- the position does not require frequent face-to-face contact with clients
- the position does not require the employee to be a member of a team where face-to-face contact on a daily basis is required with other team members at the office-based site
- the duties are not hazardous.

An employee cannot be directed to work from home nor is the University under any obligation to approve a request from an employee to enter into a working from home agreement.

The terms and conditions of employment as set out in the applicable industrial instruments that apply to the employee whilst at work also apply whilst working from home.

Conditions

Certain conditions must be met prior to approval being granted for a formal regular working from home arrangement.

These include:

- completion of WHS 52 – Agreed Working from Home Arrangement form, signed by both parties
- completion of WHS 29 – Safety and Ergonomic Self-Assessment
- all health and safety considerations have been addressed
- approval from the line manager.

Assets such as laptops, iPad's or PDA's that are purchased using University funds and provided for the exclusive off-premises use by a staff member are considered on-loan. Further instruction is outlined in the Assets Loan Agreement & FBT Declaration and accompanying Form FS69.

Access arrangements

Where required, the University, upon obtaining the consent of the employee may access a home-based site to undertake the following:

- maintenance of University equipment and supplies
- assessing and monitoring security arrangements of equipment and documents and
- health and safety assessments.

There may be instances where University management needs urgent access to a home-based site; in these circumstances as much notice as possible will be provided to the employee.

These incidences may include:

- maintenance of faulty equipment
- work health and safety purposes
- urgent security matters
- other purposes agreed to between the University and the employee.

When can a regular working from home arrangement be altered or terminated?

A working from home arrangement may be terminated or altered:

- upon request by the employee or the line manager by giving or receiving notice in writing within 10 working days where either party has failed to meet the agreed outcomes or conditions identified in the agreement
- upon change of the employee's residential address unless renegotiated
- by the line manager for reasons such as a change in employment-related legislation or other instruments that affect the nature of employment, operational requirements of the University or inefficiency in the arrangement or security risks
- by a change in business direction.

All alterations must be in writing and signed by both the line manager and employee. Once approved, the altered working from home arrangement must be filed appropriately at the local level and be available for inspection as required.

Any regular working from home arrangements must be reviewed on at least an annual basis (perhaps in conjunction with the employee's performance management review).

4.2 Working from home on an irregular basis

Irregular working from home arrangements constitutes a period of less than five working days and may occur on an adhoc basis. It is not a formal arrangement for a defined period of time.

The minimum requirements under these conditions include line manager approval through completion of forms WHS 53 - Request to work from home, irregular arrangement form and form WHS 29 - Safety & Ergonomics Self-Assessment form. Any hazards identified from the assessment must be adequately addressed and reviewed with the employee whenever there is a change to the work environment or through the performance management process.

Documents/Forms

Further advice on managing risks in university workplaces, including supporting documents and training courses are available on the Safety & Wellbeing website.

- [WHS 52 – Agreed Working from Home Arrangement Form](#)
- [WHS 53 – Request to work from Home – Irregular Arrangement](#)
- [WHS 29 - Safety & Ergonomic Self-Assessment – Working From Home Environment Checklist](#)
- [Assets Loan Agreement & FBT Declaration](#)
- [FS69 Asset Loan Form](#)

References

- [Performance Management Policy and Guideline](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act & Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#)