



Working from Home Policy

Current Policy Approved: 8 June 2021

Replaces: n/a

First Issued: 8 June 2021

Our Values

The Uniting Church in South Australia (UCSA) values each of its personnel and recognises its responsibility to provide an inclusive, productive and safe environment. It seeks to provide a place in which personnel will feel inspired to meet the objectives of the position, the Ministry Centre objective, the Uniting Church Strategic Plan and exercise the values of the Synod.

Overview

This policy provides a framework to consider requests from personnel to work from home and to implement, manage and review agreed Working from Home (WFH) arrangements. The policy aims to recognise that from time to time WFH balances the needs of the personnel and/or the organisation.

WFH is an arrangement which allows personnel to undertake their role from their home.

WFH is distinct from flexible work arrangements as prescribed in the Fair Work Act and associated awards. These WFH arrangements are considered outside of the provisions of the Fair Work Act.

In the event of facility interruption or other disruption (flood, fire, essential service failure or an epidemic or pandemic) management may require personnel to work from home. These arrangements are considered outside of this policy.

Elements of this policy may be put aside (waived) during times of crisis at the discretion of the organisation, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Elements

- Working from home is available to staff by application
- Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis
- Prior to commencing a WFH arrangement the assessment process must be completed
- Applicants need to satisfy the WHS and IT&T requirements specified in the policy

Scope

This policy applies to all personnel whose usual work location is the Uniting Church SA Synod office (212 Pirie Street, Adelaide) or the Yarthu Apinithi (Brooklyn Park Campus) or a Uniting Venues SA site as specified in their Contract of Employment.

Definitions

Personnel is any employee involved in the delivery of programs and activities for the Uniting Church in SA. For the purpose of this policy, it does not apply to volunteers or board and committee members.

Manager includes any personnel engaged in a supervisory role with one or more direct reports.

Working from Home (WFH) is an arrangement negotiated with the Synod personnel at the Synod Pirie Street Office, Brooklyn Park Campus and Uniting Venues, under which personnel may work from home to undertake a portion of their work, on an agreed regular and predictable basis.

Policy Principles

Working from Home is a working arrangement which allows personnel to undertake their work from their home or another place remote from their usual work location. A WFH arrangement may deliver greater flexibility. WFH provides flexibility and benefit to the personnel and may assist in delivering work-life balance.

WFH principles have been developed to provide a framework for personnel and management to consider WFH requests. These WFH principles shall be consistently applied across the entire organisation. Whilst it is noted that Ministers of the Word (MOW) and Ministry of Deacon (MOD) are not employees, and as part of their terms of placements inherently at times work from home, with regard to this policy MOW/MOD placed in the Synod Pirie Street office, Yarthu Apinthe (Brooklyn Park Campus) and/or a Uniting Venues SA site are considered personnel. Working arrangements relate to the nature of the work and the role itself, rather than the individual's designation. This policy is not intended to override, impinge on, or interfere with, existing arrangements of staff who conduct field work, or faculty staff who spend time away from the office during the course of their regular work.

Working from Home Principles

Application and approval requirements

Personnel application

- Personnel shall submit an application to work from home (*form under development*). However on occasion, the arrangement may be offered to personnel by management.
- Based on the WFH principles set out in this policy, personnel shall articulate as a part of their application:
 - Rationale and/or anticipated benefits to the organisation and/or themselves to working from home
 - In agreement with their manager, declare that they can perform their work as effectively from home as from the office, campus and venues, including:
 - there will be no loss in efficiency or productivity
 - there will be no negative impact on customer service levels

Management assessment

- Managers will consider and assess each application on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the personnel's and organisation's needs and responsibilities and the benefits of the proposed WFH arrangements
- When an application to WFH is being considered, the manager will take into account:
 - the personnel's role in the organisation
 - the needs of the personnel's team, their work schedule and activities/projects
 - the personnel's capacity (including skills and competencies)
 - the work, health and safety situation and requirements, including the WFH space
 - the employee's performance prior to making the request
 - the employee's ability to work autonomously
 - the suitability of the employee's home workspace (refer Appendix 1 & 2)
 - The capacity of other personnel to change their working arrangements to accommodate the WFH arrangements

Executive Officers/General Secretary

- Approval of WFH applications can only be granted by the individual's Executive Officer and/or General Secretary
- WFH applications will not be approved where it is impractical to either change the working arrangements of other personnel or to recruit new team members, to accommodate the WFH arrangements request

Non-Eligibility

WFH may not be granted in some situations. Non-eligibility criteria include the following:

- Personnel on probation are not eligible to work from home, unless exceptional circumstances are agreed by the General Secretary, This ensures time for new personnel to experience the culture of both the organisation and their work team and benefit from informal learning and face-to-face interaction. Face-to-face (client-facing) roles and roles involving significant collaboration with others will not ordinarily be eligible for WFH arrangements
- A manager would not ordinarily be able to WFH on a predominant basis (greater than 20% of their FTE)
- A WFH arrangement considered unsafe will not be approved, according to the provisions of the Work Health and Safety Regulations, requiring the Synod to ensure it has measures in place to eliminate or manage risks for their personnel (see below terms and conditions)

Deliverables and ongoing assessments

- Clear deliverables and mechanisms for monitoring output should be documented and agreed prior to the commencement of a WFH agreement.
- The manager must review these work arrangements on a regular basis to ensure:
 - All deliverables are being met
 - The quality, quantity and timeliness of the work performed is to the standard required
 - The impact on other members of the work team is not detrimental to the overall performance of the team and organisation

- The operational requirements of the area are being met
- The employee is complying with the terms of the agreement
- The WFH arrangement is continuing to meet the needs of the personnel
- Work Health and Safety requirements continue to be met
- UCA SA policies and procedures are being adhered to
- A 3 month initial trial of the individual's WFH arrangement will be conducted. If the WFH trial is determined to be successful, after reviewing the requirements of the Uniting Church Synod (as above) and the arrangements required by the employee, the WFH arrangement may be continued by agreement.

At Home Workspace

- Personnel shall have a dedicated workspace in their home. The requirements of the workspace are outlined in Appendix 1 & 2
- The dedicated workspace shall provide an appropriate level of privacy and security to enable the employee to fully comply with Uniting Church Synod of SA policies relating to the protection of information. This refers to information in electronic form, in hardcopy on paper or other media or oral, for example via a conversation
- The workspace will be assessed by the WHS Coordinator prior to the WFH arrangement commencing
- A WFH policy and a checklist shall be signed with photos attached before personnel can work from home

Cancellation of Working from Home Arrangements

The Uniting Church SA reserves the right to cancel any WFH arrangement with an employee at any time following a discussion with the personnel.

Personnel failing to comply with the policy may have their approval to work from home revoked.

WFH Terms and conditions: employment contract and/or addendum

An agreed WFH arrangement should be stated in the individual's employment contract or in an addendum to employment contract.

Duration – period of time:

- WFH arrangements will commence with an initial trial period of no more than 3 months and if renewed a review will be conducted at least every six months (see below).
- Approved WFH requests will be for a defined period, which shall not exceed 6 months, after which the arrangement is subject to review and may be renewed.

Work Pattern

- WFH may be combined with any overall working pattern, whether full time or part time, with due consideration to the other members within the team.

- An agreed WFH day can be swapped with an agreed office day, by agreement with their manager.
- WFH is considered on a daily arrangement (rather than part day)
- Personnel shall attend their usual place of work at least 50% of their contracted hours (Synod Office, Brooklyn Park Campus and / or Uniting Venues) to ensure that teamwork and relationships are maintained. As a guide:
 - Works 5 days a week: subject to role suitability, up to 2 days WFH on a regular basis could be provided
 - Works 3 or 4 days per week: subject to role suitability, 1 day WFH on a regular basis could be provided
 - Works 1 or 2 days per week: WFH on a regular rostered basis is not available

Contact and availability whilst WFH:

- Personnel should be working and contactable during office hours, as per contract of employment.
- An agreed mode and scheduling of communications, including video conferencing technology shall be agreed prior to commencing a working from home arrangement.
- Personnel shall participate in scheduled meetings as requested
- A manager may request personnel to attend the office on their rostered 'WFH day' for a specific meeting or activity, giving reasonable notice.

WHS:

- The at home work space will be assessed by the WHS Coordinator prior to commencement of WFH arrangements (refer Appendix 1 of this policy)
- A WFH arrangement considered unsafe will not be approved

Equipment:

- Personnel WFH are expected to provide and maintain their own technology hardware, internet connection and peripherals which meet minimum IT requirements (see Appendix 2 of this policy)

Leave during WFH days:

- If personnel are unwell on an agreed WFH day, personal leave should be taken.
- WFH arrangements are not a substitute for child-care or other dependent care. Personnel are responsible for ensuring that appropriate child-care or dependent care arrangements are in place whilst engaged in WFH arrangements.

Ad-hoc WFH arrangements:

- In keeping with the principles above, WFH can be granted on an ad-hoc basis, for the performance of specific tasks. Ad-hoc means:
 - Is an infrequent and irregular arrangement
 - Is agreed and confirmed in writing prior to commencing WFH, but does not essentially require an addendum to the contract of employment
 - a maximum of 6 days within a three month period and is no more than 2 days in a given week
 - Can be approved by the personnel's manager and does not require Executive Officer or General Secretary's approval. The manager shall inform their Executive Officer.

WFH Dress Code:

- To maintain professionalism when meeting on-screen, personnel working from home are required to dress in a neat and tidy fashion (casual corporate), commensurate/appropriate to the audience (i.e. dressing gowns, pyjamas, active-wear and sportswear are not considered appropriate attire).

Responsibilities

The **Executive Officer Resources** is responsible for:

- approval of, and amending, the policy, in consultation with the Executive Officers
- periodically reviewing the policy
- ensuring all staff are aware of the policy

General Secretary is responsible for:

- Approving WFH arrangements for Executive Officers
- Periodically assessing compliance with the policy to ensure consistency of application of the policy across all Ministry Centres

Executive Officers are responsible for:

- Approving WFH arrangements for personnel
- Giving every effort to ensure consistent application of the policy across all Ministry Centres

Managers are responsible for:

- receiving, considering and assessing applications from personnel to WFH
- ensuring they and personnel for whom they are responsible are aware of and comply with the policy
- ensuring that they have communication systems in place to help personnel remain connected to the team
- assessing that the personnel is able to cope with different or reduced social interaction and contact
- assessing that the personnel is able to commit to a suitable work regime
- convening meetings with personnel on a regular, at least weekly, basis
- requesting that their place of work at home is safe, free from distractions, clean and healthy
- ensuring a written agreement with the personnel is in place

Related Legislation and Policies

UCA SA WHS Policy

WHS Act 2012

Fair Work Act 2009

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or more often if circumstances change.

Appendices

Appendix 1 –WHS Workspace, policy and checklist

Appendix 2 –IT&T requirements

Working from Home WHS Workspace, policy and checklist

WHS Duties & Principles

Both the Uniting Church Synod in South Australia (UCSA) and its personnel hold separate duties under the Work Health & Safety Act (2012) with the principle purpose of ensuring health and safety in the workplace so far as is reasonably practicable. It is an expectation of this policy that personnel will need to demonstrate that their WFH workspace is consistent with that provided by UCSA at their usual work location and that the risks to their health and safety have been removed or reasonably controlled.

A checklist is provided in this appendix to help personnel identify if they have a potentially suitable WFH workspace, however the included items are not considered mandatory. Personnel are advised that work health and safety is not related solely to the physical workspace and that an individual UCSA WFH Risk Assessment will be undertaken for each application. In assessing the appropriateness and suitability of individual WFH arrangements, wider WHS risks such as, work role, lone working, existing health conditions and capacity, emergency response, reasonable adjustments and equipment required, may also be taken into consideration.

UCSA is under no obligation and therefore accepts no responsibility to provide additional workspaces, work equipment or service to facilitate personnel to WFH under this policy. Personnel are encouraged to raise concerns prior to application.

Definitions

Dedicated workspace is an enclosed (indoor) area, such as a home office or study area, designed for that specific purpose. It is not intended that staff use home areas or equipment predominantly used for other home activities (such as kitchens or indoor/outdoor dining tables and chairs). Workspaces should require no or very minimal setup for regular use.

Consistent with that provided by UCSA at their usual work location does not mean identical, however must be fit for work purposes to a reasonable standard. It is a principle of this policy that WFH should not substantively increase the overall level of risk to any person than would be applicable at their usual work location.

Personnel Responsibilities

Personnel who are approved to WFH shall:

- ensure that they continue to meet the requirements and principles of all other UCSA WHS related policies and procedures, including but not limited to the, Incident Management Policy and incident reporting procedures; Ergonomics and Work Environment Policy; Smoke-Free Workplace Policy; Manual Handling Policy.
- maintain their personal safety and security whilst WFH and reasonably secure their location from unwanted access. Safe egress in an emergency shall also be maintained.

Personnel who are approved to WFH shall **not**:

- move (borrow) furniture or equipment from their usual place of work for the express purpose of WFH. *(This does not include portable items provided by UCSA to meet the requirements of a specific role, such as a laptop or equipment needed for off-site training delivery).*
- arrange to hold any 'in person' UCSA work-related meetings at their WFH location and shall continue to use spaces provided for such meetings at their usual work location, other UCSA held location or other appropriate business, public venue or public location.

Checklist

The following checklist is provided to help personnel identify a potentially suitable WFH workspace **prior** to submitting an application to WFH. *(Individual items are not considered mandatory).* On submitting an application, personnel will be required to complete an online WFH Self-Assessment containing these questions as **part** of UCSA WFH Risk Assessment and submit supporting photographs of their workspace.

Please do not submit this checklist.

		YES	NO
1	Will the chair you will be using be in good condition, reasonably comfortable, stable and supportive?		
2	Will the chair you will be using have an adjustable seat and backrest?		
3	Will the chair you will be using be able to be positioned close enough to your desk to ensure comfortable forearm and effective back support?		
4	Will the working space at the desk you will be using be sufficient - comfortably accommodate your work, screen, keyboard, mouse and/or laptop computer?		
5	Will the desk you will be using be stable and high enough for you to be comfortably seated with sufficient legroom?		
6	Will you be able to adjust the computer screen(s) you will be using to ensure clear and glare-free viewing?		
7	Will you be using a sit/stand or other form of standing desk?		
8	Will you have natural daylight entering your work area?		
9	Will the lighting be sufficient for the work being undertaken?		
10	Will there be sufficient floor space in your working area for free movement?		
11	Is the floor surface or covering in your main work area in good condition and not causing a potential slipping/tripping hazard?		
12	Will you be able to remove, minimise and/or secure any other trip hazards in and around your work area such as power cords and floor mats?		
13	Will the ambient (background) noise levels be acceptable?		

14	Will the temperature able to be adjusted (up/down) to a comfortable level?		
15	Will your home workplace be generally safe, free from distractions, clean and healthy?		
16	Will all work related electrical equipment be in good condition and free from damage such as frayed cords?		
17	Will all work related electrical equipment be safely attached to a switched power outlet (or power board) protected by a Residual Current Device (RCD)?		
18	Will you have a working (recently tested) smoke alarm in or near your dedicated work area?		
19	Will you have a fire extinguisher or fire blanket (Australian Standard) suitable for home use nearby?		
20	Will you have a clear unobstructed exit route in the event of an emergency?		
21	Is your WFH location in a high bushfire risk area?		
	If you answered yes to Q20, do you have a bushfire plan in place?		
22	Will you have access to a reasonable home use (or higher) first aid kit?		
23	Will you be predominantly working alone at home during work hours?		
24	Will there be an appropriate person generally available nearby (neighbour or non-dependent cohabitee) who could assist you in an emergency?		
25	Will you have emergency contact numbers and more than one means available (landline, mobile(s), Mxie Softphone etc.) to contact them?		
26	Does your home contents insurance policy provide home office cover?		

Working from Home IT&T requirements

Currently the minimum specifications for staff supplied WFH computing equipment is:

Windows / Linux

Core i3 or higher
4GB RAM
SSD (preferred)
Windows 10 version 2009, 2004, 1909 or LTSC
Ubuntu 18.04 / 20.04 or Red Hat EL 7.9 / 8.3
3.5mm or USB headset with microphone

Apple

Any Mac device running macOS Mojave (10.14), macOS Catalina (10.15), or macOS Big Sur (11)
3.5mm or USB headset with microphone

From time to time VMware releases new versions of the Horizon client and these updates should be applied promptly. Occasionally these updates have new operating system requirements which may alter the information above. More information can be found regarding this (via the specific release notes) from the download page here: <https://vmware.com/go/viewclients>.

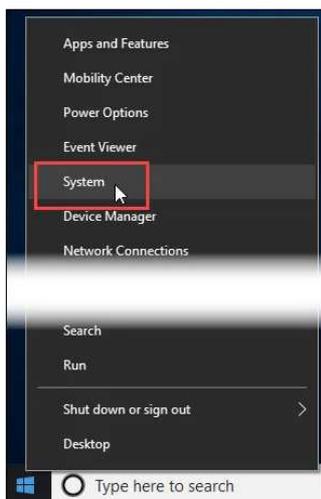
If you are unsure whether your home computer meets the required specifications, please supply IT&T with a screenshot / photo of the following:

Windows

Find Basic System Information In Windows

This is the easiest way to find your computer's name, type of processor or CPU, how much RAM it has, and what version of Windows is on it.

Simply right-click on the Windows button in the bottom-left corner of your screen, and then click **System**.



Linux

Contact IT&T for further assistance.

Apple

<https://support.apple.com/en-au/HT201260>

Internet Access

The minimum specification for WFH Internet access is:

- NBN or Fixed Wireless Broadband with sufficient capacity and quota to cope with up to 5GB / day of additional usage.

Mobile, ADSL or other Internet connection types may also be suitable, however more analysis must be undertaken in consultation with IT&T prior to approval.