

Wellbeing Guide for Working from Home on a Temporary Basis

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide all Maynooth University employees with guidance and useful tips on temporary working from home or working remotely, during this challenging time. The guide aims to provide practical advice to help your overall wellbeing, whilst working from home.

There is a dedicated Coronavirus COVID – 19 webpage on the Maynooth University website <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/coronavirus>

How to Prepare for Working Remotely

Where to start

- Agree temporary remote working arrangements with your manager/Head of Department, including regular communication with them.
- Identify with your manager/Head of Department the work to be done at home.
- Identify what equipment you need to set up a safe workspace at home and agree these items with your manager/Head of Department.
- Identify a suitable safe space within your home for home working.
- Agree plans and contacts to be used in the event of an emergency
- Check that you have contact details for your manager and immediate team. You can also refer to the University website to find [contact details](#).
- It is important that a good system of communication is in place when you are working from home to ensure your safety, health and welfare is not compromised in any way. You also need regular contact for updates on work related information and feedback on the work you have completed. It will also help to prevent you feeling isolated.

A working space that is suited to your role

- Think about how your day is usually structured at work and where in your home is best suited to complete your tasks.

- Choose a quiet, distraction-free working space that allows you to work comfortably and safely.
- Ensure that the Internet connection is good in your chosen space.
- Check that you have access to all relevant systems and tools. This includes access to e-mails, networks, shared folders, Microsoft Teams. Ensure that your laptop is encrypted, and Virtual Private Network (VPN) is set up, if required.
- Check that you have suitable light, heat and ventilation to be able to work comfortably.
- Make sure the floor is clean, dry and free from slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Ensure the space is suitably located to power sockets to avoid trailing cables and overloading of sockets.
- Take frequent breaks away from the screen.

Accessing services remotely

- **Microsoft Teams** as part of Office365 provides the capability for data storage, online meetings via Teams Calendar and individual voice/video calls via Teams Chat. [Click here](#) for more information regarding Microsoft Teams.
- It is recommended to use OneDrive and Microsoft Teams. Both are safely & securely accessible via the Office 365 web portal or various downloadable apps.
- **Voicemail** can be accessed remotely by dialling 01 708 3400 followed by # and your extension number and PIN.
- For more information on working remotely and IT [Click here](#).
- If you have any IT related questions, please contact **IT support** by emailing servicedesk@mu.ie

Prepare for work as normal

- Getting ready as you would going into work, will help you to get into the right mindset and will help to focus and concentrate on achieving your tasks for that day.

Plan your day

- Begin each day by planning. Schedule your start and finish time and include structured breaks within your day.

- List the various tasks you wish to complete that day. If you want to be more particular about your list, you could identify the tasks that you would like to complete before lunch.
- You can also use this to form a plan for the entire week. It can often help to consider tasks in groups of three. Ask yourself questions such as:
 - What 3 things do I really need to finalise this week?
 - What do I need to do to complete these in full?
 - How much time do I need?
- Time Management is important
- Time Monitoring how do we adapt, prioritise and reprioritise

Communication with your team

Remote working can present communication challenges and communication breakdown can occur. Stay in touch with your manager / Head of Department and colleagues on a regular basis and agree any flexibility that might be required around work times with your manager / Head of Department. For employees that are not familiar with working from home, this new, rapid transition may feel very isolating and overwhelming. To overcome this feeling, we should ensure that additional communication lines are opened through this stressful and demanding time. By arranging virtual team meetings through Microsoft Teams, we can increase communication with each other and remain engaged with our colleagues. It is worthwhile discussing with your colleagues what are the best ways to keep in touch e.g. email, Teams chat, phone call, video call etc..Different forms of communication suit different people so work together to agree what blend of communications might work for you and your colleagues and the frequency of those communications.

Fresh air

Individuals suddenly spending an increased proportion of time at home should be mindful of the importance of taking breaks and getting outside as much as possible. Many people enjoy breaking up their workday by going for a walk at lunchtime or may prefer to do some gardening after work. Do whatever will work best for you.

Fresh air and light exercise will reduce stress levels, help you relax and switch off from work.

Working Remotely

Employees continue to have a responsibility to take reasonable care, in order to protect their own safety, health and welfare. In addition, employees are expected to continue to comply with standards, behaviours and policies as you would when working on campus. Examples of this include adherence to the following key areas.

Maynooth University Data Protection Guidance

Due to the current restrictions in place, we have published [additional guidelines](#) for protecting Maynooth University's data when working remotely. Employees must ensure that all University controlled data is processed securely, and measures should be taken that no unauthorised person can access such information. We ask that you review and comply with these guidelines. Please take time to check that you have completed and/or refreshed our [Data Protection online course](#) as a priority.

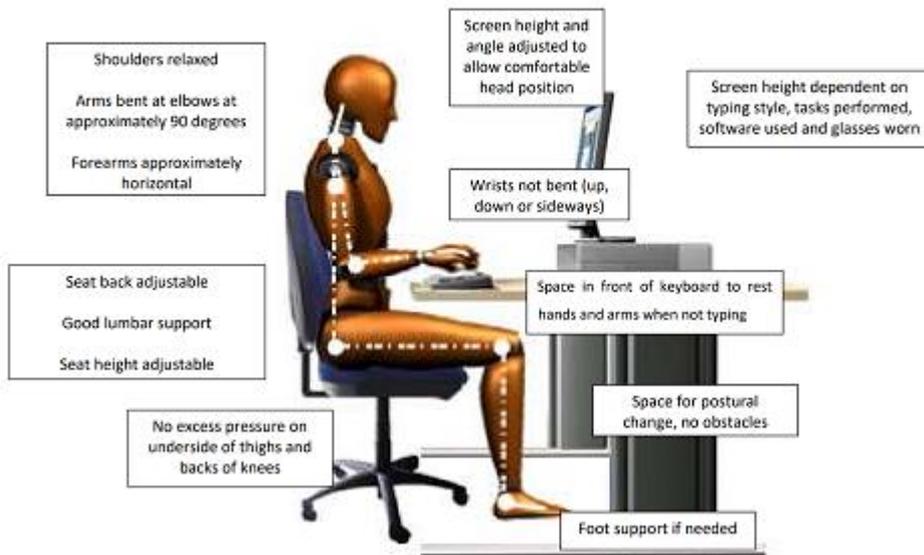
The Data Protection Commission website also provides information on Data Protection while working remotely <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en>

Maynooth University Health & Safety Guidance

It is the individual employee's responsibility to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk whilst working remotely during this time. You will find further [Health & Safety Guidance](#) within the Coronavirus COVID-19 section on the Maynooth University website. Please stay safe and continue to follow all advice from the HSE.

If using a laptop, position it on a table that is comfortable to sit at, keeping the laptop at a comfortable height (lower to mid-chest) and at arm's length.

Workstation Set Up Diagram



Learning & Development

The learning and development opportunities for employees of Maynooth University include Leadership & Management programmes, Professional Skills programmes related to your role, programmes to support you working in MU and Employee Wellbeing seminars.

The following e-learning seminars focus on working remotely and might prove particularly useful during this challenging time.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/learning-and-development/learning-and-development-services/e-learning>

Centre for Teaching & Learning

Our Centre for Teaching and Learning have created a [Moodle page](#) called 'Remote Teaching - Employee Guidance Page': Here you will find a guidance document for employees on the many practicalities associated with remote teaching. It is also a

place where you can share good practice, upload guidance and tutorials. It will also provide a bank of resources for employees interested in developing a more blended approach to their own teaching practice.

Working as a Team

Being part of a team, whether on campus or working remotely, is a collaborative and collegial experience. Employees should ensure that they continue to perform their roles as expected and be available for calls and virtual team meetings as required. Any important updates should be communicated with your colleagues in a timely manner. Employees should try to maintain a good daily working routine and communicate any challenges or issues that impact upon your work. We ask that, as always, you remain mindful of the Maynooth University Values, which are:

- Scholarly rigour
- Academic freedom
- Integrity & ethical Behaviour
- Collegiality, transparency and trust
- Equality, inclusiveness and social justice
- Operational excellence, organisational flexibility and responsiveness
- Dignity, respect and care for the individual

Employee Wellbeing

We continue to provide our employees with a number of services and supports. Please take some time to review the following links should they be required.

- [Inspire Workplace Services](#)
- [Employee Wellbeing at Maynooth University](#)
- [Employee Wellbeing e-learning](#)
- [Employee Wellbeing Seminars](#)

The services and policies include:

Inspire Workplace Services - An employee assistance programme which offers;

- 24/7/365 Helpline Support
- Immediate Telephone Support
- Up to 6 sessions of counselling, as appropriate
- Financial Information
- Legal Information
- Consumer/Citizens Information
- Management Support via Helpline
- Online Support Hub, with guides, resource library and online self-help courses

Employee Wellbeing Seminars - For information on our employee wellbeing seminars view the [Learning & Development Directory](#) .

See Change Workplace Pledge - Maynooth University has signed up to the [See Change Workplace Pledge](#) as part of our on-going commitment to support awareness of Mental Health. See Change have developed a Guide to Understanding Mental Health Stigma which is available [here](#) and a [See Change Briefing doc](#) for Managers.

They have also developed [The pocket guide to returning to the workplace](#) to support people returning to the workplace after a prolonged period of Covid-19 measures.

HR [Policies \(A-Z\)](#) - deal with areas of employee wellbeing

Additional Supports - COVID -19

To support your wellbeing during this unprecedented period, Human Resources have a number of [online wellbeing webinars](#) available to all employees

Working from Home Wellbeing Guides

The [Health & Safety Authority \(HSA\)](#) - offer a range of supports on addressing work related stress, including a [work related stress worksheet for employees](#)

The [HSE](#) offer mental health supports and online courses including a video-based wellbeing programme. This evidence-based programme provides a unique opportunity for people to learn more about mindfulness, gratitude, self-care and resilience. As we continue to adapt our lifestyles to deal with COVID-19 and are faced with different challenges, [Minding Your Wellbeing](#) aims to provide simple tools and guidance to develop and maintain a positive outlook by looking after our mental health and wellbeing.

['In this Together'](#) campaign offers guidance on minding one's mental health, coping at home, eating healthy and tips on staying active.

[Mental Health Ireland](#) also offer a range of supports in the form posters, tips, videos, podcasts and articles - no login/account required.

Further Information

For further information, please continue to check the Covid-19 Staff section of the [website](#) and e-mail updates that are issued to all employees.

For daily updates on COVID-19, visit www.gov.ie/health-covid-19.

Other useful sources of information are

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

Coping at Home <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/606da7-coping-at-home-during-covid-19/>

Looking after our Mental Health <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/covid-19/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>