



## Introduction

To support the transition back to campus, [Hybrid Working Guidelines](#) have been published to support managers and employees to consider ways of working whilst social distancing (and, therefore, reduced capacity office space on campus) remains in operation; also seeking to retain some of the benefits realised since March 2020, and where operationally viable, to increase flexibility in the working locations of our staff. As we transition to new ways of working, it is important to consider how we adapt our performance management processes and approaches to support this transition.

Managing hybrid teams, where employees will be working some time on campus and sometime remotely across the working week, requires a shift in emphasis and approach to ensure employees continue to be supported, engaged and motivated whilst working in a different way.

This shift includes the following elements:

- managing performance by outputs rather than inputs, ie outputs are more important than time spent at a desk/computer, whether in the office or working remotely
- supporting employees to remain connected with the University's priorities especially where these priorities are changing and evolving
- considering how individual objectives may change and evolve more regularly in response to the University's priorities
- providing feedback methods of performance that link to specific outputs/projects/activities during the year
- discussing employee's wellbeing and psychological health as part of regular conversations

The Appraisal and Development Conversations (ADC) framework already incorporates these elements and it is encouraged that they are considered when planning for both annual ADCs and regular conversations throughout the year.

## Principles and approaches

Conversations should focus on treating employees as adults, based on trust and managed by outputs.

Regular check in conversations (as opposed to check up conversations) are encouraged and should be open two-way conversations, with the opportunity to discuss how work and life is going. Managers should continue to take the opportunities and learnings where remote working has been in place to establish clear goals for teams and individuals to ensure employees are clear about their work priorities.

Discussions should focus on outputs and achievements, progress towards objectives, recognition of good work/achievements, any support required where challenges are identified and provide the opportunity to discuss wellbeing/work life balance.

There should be flexibility to tailor/update and agree objectives on a regular basis. Some objectives may change regularly to remain relevant/reflect changing priorities whilst some maybe more static.

Conversations regarding how the culture of hybrid working will operate within teams, including behaviours and values to support team cohesion, should be encouraged. This may include attitudes towards those working remotely dialling in to meetings rather than being expected to attend in person; the amount of days spent in the office or on campus and where staff split some of their day working remotely and working in the office. There may be a proximity bias that leads to incorrect assumptions that employees who spend more time in the office are more productive than those who are not. Practices should be put in place to counteract the possibility of this bias occurring and similarly should ensure new work opportunities are balanced and not only given to those with increased office presence (ie just because they are there). Resources and webinars to support these conversations are available on the [Professional Development web pages](#).

Employees should be treated fairly and inclusive practices applied across teams to promote connectivity and engagement, which will support performance outputs.

## Considering impacts on performance

Hybrid working may mean some employees may not be physically present where key decision making/key communications takes place, this could be biased towards certain role types/teams where some are in the office more than others and the impact of this may be felt unequally. Consider how employees are engaged in key decision-making within the team, for example, where decision-making discussions take place within the office, encourage those working remotely to be dialled into these conversations where relevant.

Ensure there are regular opportunities to update employees and include them in key communications. Consider this in the context of regular check-in conversations and the opportunity for regular team meetings where all employees have equal opportunity to fully participate to support individual and team performance.

Hybrid working could have an impact on informal development/coaching opportunities/career progression if not consciously managed. This may be particularly relevant for early careers or those new to the University who do not have established networks. Consider the ways in which employees can learn from others, facilitate opportunities to have in-person connections with more experienced colleagues and to access informal development opportunities. Further information can be found on the [Career Hub](#).

Be mindful that developmental opportunities may be more afforded to staff working more time on campus, the 'can you just' concept could lead to those spending more time working remotely at a professional disadvantage. Consider how development opportunities are provided fairly across the team.

Ensure that you manage your (and the team's) time on campus in a way which enables opportunities to spend time together and on a 1-1 basis. Specific consideration should be given as to which activities could be better delivered through in-person interaction; such examples may include recruitment activities, inductions and ADCs.

For new starters, consider how they will be supported to fully integrate into their team(s) and the wider University community and provide opportunities to make connections with colleagues to support them in feeling connected. For example, it may be appropriate for inductions to take place full-time on campus with hybrid working being introduced at a later date to provide employees with a campus-based induction experience.

Where any potential performance issues arise, ensure they are discussed as soon as possible, and that support is provided/appropriate plans be put in place to improve and sustain performance outputs.

There should be particular attention given to workloads with regular discussions about workload taking place to ensure employees are not over/under utilised, which may impact on their wellbeing, performance and engagement.

## Holding conversations

Where staff are returning to campus from working at home, there should be opportunity to undertake a 'return to campus' conversation to discuss:

- how employees are feeling about the return and any concerns they may have
- practical elements regarding access to resources and training that they may wish to access, and
- a discussion about short to medium-term objectives and priorities where relevant

Provide regular opportunities to review objectives to ensure employees are producing the required outputs and are focusing on the right priorities. Encourage employees to be accountable for their own objectives and outputs, including recording any actions and/or agreements from check-in conversations.

Encourage connectivity within teams to facilitate informal, quick, in the moment feedback to widen trust and understanding.

Provide good quality feedback to employees over any development areas and create space for employees to discuss their development aims/goals with you. Development resources can be found through the [Career Hub](#).

Give recognition for good work during regular conversations to support engagement and motivation.

Ensure conversations cover/provide opportunity to discuss wellbeing, work-life balance and workload as these factors impact on performance outputs. Continue to be alert to any behavioural changes (ie employees becoming withdrawn, becoming negative, not participating in meetings/team discussions or cancelling meetings/conversations), which could be a result of workload issues, unclear priorities and particular challenges/barriers to progressing work within their objectives or broader wellbeing issues. Actively discuss and explore this with team members and put any required support in place. There is a useful practical guide on planning and having a wellbeing related conversation provided by the [NHS](#) and our wellbeing resources/learning materials below.

## Discussing and agreeing objectives

In a more disconnected environment, linking individual objectives with University priorities is particularly important and conversations should be facilitated by access to, and understanding of, School/Departmental Balanced Frameworks.

Where priorities change or evolve, it is particularly important that direction and clarity is provided, especially where this impacts on individual objectives and/or areas of focus.

Where local priorities are changing regularly, it is encouraged that there is a shift away from agreeing annual objectives to agreeing shorter-term/more flexible objectives, which reflect those changing priorities.

Encourage a flexible mind-set by supporting employees to own their objectives, to expect change and even anticipate it.

## Collaboration and accountability

Discuss and regularly review ways of working individually and collectively to promote shared accountability and engagement.

Collaborative goals are even more important when working in a hybrid-way. Cross-functional collaborative objectives should be considered and agreed. There should be importance placed on sharing success across different teams to promote and support collaboration to improve and maintain motivation and performance.

## Wellbeing and social connectivity

Social connectivity in teams when working in a hybrid way is really important. Opportunities for staff to socially connect within their teams or wider networks as part of their working week should be encouraged to promote engagement and wellbeing, which should positively impact on motivation and performance.

Take into account and discuss different working styles within teams to help maximise team performance and avoid wellbeing/workload issues.

It may be challenging initially, both for those without longstanding work relationships to navigate hybrid working (eg new starters and those just starting out in work) and those who do have longstanding work relationship where there is less opportunity to interact with their colleagues, both scenarios could impact on performance and wellbeing. Think about what support may be helpful in terms of wellbeing and social connectivity for all members of your team.

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### Links to ADC resources

- [ADC Guidelines](#)
- [ADC Training](#)
- [ADC Key Dates](#)
- [ADC Forms](#)
- [ADC FAQs](#)

### Staff wellbeing guide

- [Staff Wellbeing Guide](#)

### Learning and development tools

- [Effective Remote Working](#)
- [On-line Wellbeing Programme](#)
- [Line Managers Guide to Supporting Employee Wellbeing](#) -
- [Leadership and Management Webinars](#)