

Dynamic Working for all staff and managers

What is Dynamic working?

Dynamic Working is an approach where you deliver your priorities in a flexible way whilst maintaining service delivery. It is about delivering your contract of employment and the duties and responsibilities of your job role but with the flexibility on where and how this is best achieved.

Why are we moving to Dynamic Working?

We have been driven by the desire to create a culture that values experience and empowers colleagues to prioritise their professional and personal lives. We believe Dynamic Working creates a more inclusive environment which supports a high-performance, high-trust culture focusing on how you perform and not how many hours you spend in the office. Our focus must be the outcomes we achieve for our beneficiaries and each other. Greater choice over work location is something which most staff have fed back during staff surveys as being important to them.

How is Dynamic Working different to Flexible Working?

Flexible working is a change to your contractual hours, e.g. compressed hours, job share, reduction in hours, or the pattern of your working time, e.g. starting or finishing at defined times on specific days. This is a formal agreement to change the terms and conditions of your contract of employment. Flexible Working Applications will continue to be needed where a person is not available for work (whether on or off-campus) during a specific time on a regular basis.

How many days do I need to be on campus?

Dynamic Working isn't about having a set number of days on or off campus. However, the duties of your role will determine the best place for you to work. For example, if you deliver a face to face seminar twice a week or cover a help desk then that will determine where you will be working on those days. Dynamic working is about a blend of hybrid working, meeting the needs of our beneficiaries and being an active team member.

Dynamic Working is not a 'one size fits all' approach - discuss this with your manager so you are clear on the expectations for your role and the needs of the service.

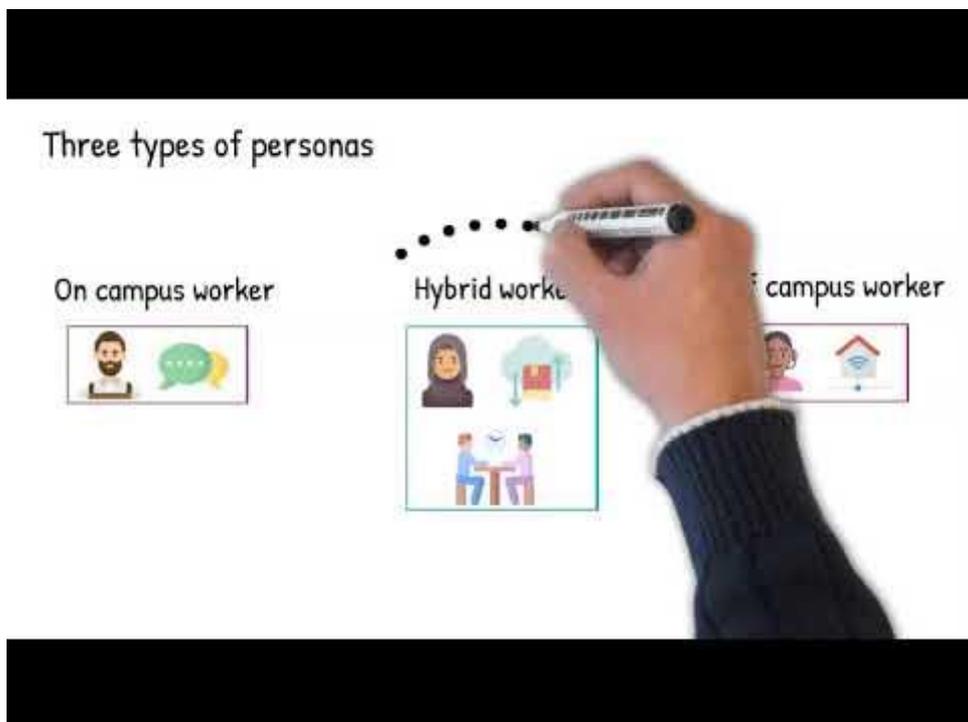
Can everyone work in a dynamic way?

The majority of roles can be carried out in a dynamic way but some roles are better suited than others. This includes staff on fixed term and temporary contracts.

We have identified three types of worker persona:

	<p>Campus Worker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My work involves face to face interaction with students, staff and others • The nature of my job means all or almost all of my job couldn't be done off campus
	<p>Hybrid Worker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know what I need to achieve, and I work from a location which best suits each activity • I attend campus for team activities, face to face teaching, pastoral responsibilities and citizenship duties • Some of my work involves using equipment, technology or other resources which are on campus • Some of my work is better suited to a location where I won't be interrupted or distracted
	<p>Remote Worker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of my work means I'm located outside of the UK in an international setting • I don't come onto campus but connect with colleagues virtually

Watch our Dynamic Working video



How will this impact the services we provide?

Dynamic Working will be beneficial for service delivery, for example, when colleagues no longer need to commute every day, services may have scope to offer different service availability within their existing staff teams e.g. when learning or

business is done in different time zones. This should still be within the scope of the hours that staff are contracted to work.

Staff will still be required to provide the services our beneficiaries expect - if those activities are in person (and cannot be done remotely) then that will still need to be resourced accordingly.

We have also invested in the right technology to enable different work arrangements, aid collaboration, and enhance delivery to our beneficiaries.

What is an agile workspace?

Agile workspaces are spaces designed for maximum flexibility. They empower employees to work how, where and when they choose, and given them all of the technology they need to work collaboratively. In agile workplaces, the majority of employees don't have assigned desks. Generally, employees are encouraged to choose whatever setting best suits the activity they're doing at any given time.

For example:

- Soft seating areas may be preferred for informal meetings, collaborative discussions, or just for taking breaks.
- Quiet spaces may be chosen for private study, and intensive focus on complex tasks and problems.
- Iso-stations may be used by staff passing through a work area, just for quick logins, schedule checking, last-minute review of meeting notes etc.
- Lounge tables, or dinging type tables may be used for team project work and small meetings.
- Small and large meeting rooms are used for more formal meetings.
- The 7th floor project is a prototype for developing similar spaces across the University.

What if people do not want to work dynamically?

We have a very clearly defined ambition to be an inclusive organisation where every individual can bring their best selves to their work. However, we are not forcing people to work dynamically, rather we want to give staff the autonomy to decide what works best for the University, their team and for them. For those that prefer to work on campus, it is important that colleagues are not burdened unduly with other staff members on campus tasks.

How can I get to know people across the University if I don't bump into them in corridors informally anymore? I don't always want to schedule a meeting on Teams!

Dynamic working enables you to organise your work in a way that enables you to do it in the best location according to the nature of the work. For most people this will mean that part of their time is spent on campus and part will be spent working

remotely. During those times on campus you can maximise the opportunities to meet others and maintain and build networks and connections.

Join Yammer and get involved in our online community, enrol on development sessions and volunteer for University wide initiatives such as graduation or Clearing. Schedule informal meeting with colleagues using Teams to have a cuppa and a catch up.

Encourage the use of Teams as both a professional and a social platform:

- create chat groups of people they used to sit near who are not necessarily actually in their team/directly working with.
- organise a daily 'coffee break' in the calendar at a specific time – anyone can drop in and chat about anything.
- start a monthly 'all ears' department Teams meet where anyone can suggest a topic and present their ideas.
- Create buddy groups that can meet virtually to discuss challenges or ideas.

Top Tip – use the chat function in Teams to message colleagues rather than using email.

How will this impact our sense of community?

The use of technology enables teams to stay connected. Working Dynamically doesn't mean never having face to face contact. It's about enabling our people to have flexibility in how and where they work to achieve their priorities.

Top tip - create opportunities to bring people together especially when welcoming new members of staff to your team or to celebrate successes.

How do I maintain my wellbeing whilst working dynamically?

Dynamic Working enables you to achieve a greater sense of wellbeing by giving you more autonomy, flexibility, and control over how and where you work (within the requirements of your role). If you are experiencing dips in your wellbeing, speak to your manager. You can also visit the [Wellbeing](#) intranet page with lots of information about being well working from home, digital wellbeing and mental health.

Our EAP provider, [Pam Assist](#) is a free and confidential service available to all staff and offers a range of services.

Should meetings be held on Teams?

Depending on the nature of the meeting they should be online where possible – this will not only save time for people having to commute, reduce pressure on meeting rooms across campus and help reduce carbon emissions as per the Birmingham Clean Air Act. Staff can be on campus and still connect, via Teams, into the meeting without being physically present.

How does dynamic working impact academic staff?

The flexibility of academic work has meant that historically those who teach and/or research have had more ownership of when they work on or off-campus, attending

for lectures, tutorials, lab and workshop sessions as well as to conduct physical research while writing papers, marking, assessing and preparing off-campus. The pandemic has shifted expectations from students with an increased demand for online teaching and learning resources.

Dynamic working supports this changed set of expectations for accessibility and learning content. For academic staff, this means finding a balance of being accessible and available to colleagues and students both on and off-campus as relevant to the activity. Some academics will need to conduct research using on-campus facilities and equipment meaning the location of work will be determined by this. Others may be able to conduct research elsewhere but come onto campus to collaborate with staff and mentor junior colleagues as well as lead seminars for students and staff.

What is the University's Dynamic Working Policy?

This is the document that states the aims of the University in introducing and embedding the principles of dynamic working. The policy itself explains the purpose, reasoning and the framework in which teams across the University can model their own ways of working to achieve a dynamic approach. You can view it by [clicking here](#).

How will we make this happen?

The pandemic demonstrated how quickly colleagues adapted to working remotely, adopting new ways of working, communicating, collaborating and interacting using new technologies such as Teams. Through the staff surveys 87% of respondents told us of the benefits of working in this way and the desire to maintain many of the positives of this experience. Post-pandemic, Dynamic Working seeks to retain many of the benefits of remote working through the adoption of a hybrid approach whereby time is spent both on and off campus during the working week.

Managers will be having regular conversations with their teams to ensure Dynamic Working is rolled out consistently and fairly. We also plan to listen to your feedback so we can continue to learn from this transition together.

Manager FAQs

What support will there be for me as a manager?

We will be offering a blend of support to help you to manage in a dynamic environment – look out for these in your inbox via Aston Connects and on the Leading Aston Yammer feed. We are also building a plethora of resources, tool kits and top tips to support you to manage your team(s) dynamically – visit the [OD](#) or [Dynamic Working](#) intranet page for more information. We also encourage you to speak with your HR /OD Business Partner to discuss any challenges or to consider what dynamic working looks like for your team.

How do I transition my team to working dynamically?

Start by engaging your team by asking how they could best work together.

First, established routine meetings and ways of working.

Example

My team decided to connect virtually every Tuesday and Thursday to debrief on priorities and schedules. The team decided once a month we would all come onto campus for a face to face team meeting.

We also discussed the importance of setting our status in Teams and keeping our Outlook calendar up to date and visible, so colleagues know our availability.

Second, discuss how they would structure their days.

Example

We all have different ways we like to work and different needs for flexibility, As a team, we decided that as long as our colleagues actively communicate their needs and plans, everyone would stay aligned. We identified the activities that would happen on campus and I communicated my expectations for our team performance.

We also discussed expectations around those who choose to work outside of core hours - sending and responding to emails, meetings times and impact on the team and our beneficiaries.

Finally, discuss ways to encourage social engagement - let the team come up with the ideas.

Example

We decided to hold a monthly virtual quiz and a virtual weekly morning coffee so people could start their day catching up with colleagues.

How will I know my staff are performing?

If you have identified clear priorities in your MDC conversations and your people have clear outcomes to achieve these, then you will know if they are performing. Having regular 1-2-1 catch ups and team meetings are essential to enable you to identify gaps in performance early, spots signs of dips in wellbeing and maintain effective relationships with your people.

Top Tip - the Planner app in Teams can help you track individual and team activity, manage workloads and recognise outcomes achieved.

How do I create a high performing team?

Here are some ways in which you can build and lead a high performing team:

- identify clear priorities in MDC conversations ensuring your people have clear priorities and outcomes to achieve.
- have regular 1-2-1 catch ups and team meetings - this will help you to identify gaps in performance early, provide support when needed and maintain your relationship with your people.
- avoid asking those who prefer to work on campus to take on more tasks as "they are there already".

- be clear on your expectations for how Dynamic Working will look like for your team and on how performance will be measured.
- check in with team members and ask how they are doing - dips in wellbeing (add wellbeing intranet page link) or performance can go undetected in a dynamic environment.
- model the behaviours you expect from your team - view the manager checklist (add link) for more guidance.
- be inclusive. Even if some people are on campus, hold all-team meetings online to be fair to everyone or hold monthly 'on campus' meeting to bring everyone together.
- adopt a coaching style of leadership - ask don't tell and recognise a job well done.

Should formal meetings be held via Teams?

This needs to be considered on a case by case basis. There are benefits to continuing to hold virtual formal meetings e.g. where an individual would find it difficult to travel for health reasons.

Most formal meetings, outside of the pandemic limitations, are better held face to face to allow full understanding of the issues and interpersonal dynamics of the case to be considered. It also can be easier to judge where a welfare break is needed if an individual becomes distressed.

View our guidance on [delivering truly effective meetings](#).

As a manager, how can I get my team dynamics right and encourage team working when they only occasionally see each other in person?

Make the most of team meetings when you do meet in person: allow time for the team to reconnect or for new teams, to properly build interpersonal relationships before shifting to offsite working. Virtual teams work best when there is some face to face interaction and where individuals do get to meet in person on a social basis from time to time. Encourage individuals to have catch ups with each other outside of more structured group meetings where there is an opportunity to get to know each other and to share ideas and thoughts in smaller groups or one to one.

How much notice do I have to give a member of staff to be on campus?

None. their contract of employment gives their workplace as Aston so any working day could be on campus.

How do I manage rotas whilst enabling my team to work dynamically?

If you have a specific task that is on a rota system, these should be organised to ensure service levels are maintained. Try to keep rotas fair across the team – such as scheduling across a day or half day per staff member to optimise their time on campus.

Can a member of staff work whilst on leave outside of the UK?

Any work from overseas can only be after an assessment via the Global Mobility team. HRBPs have a global mobility questionnaire which should be completed in advance of any arrangements being made.

Recruitment and Induction

How should I Interview candidates for a role?

This will depend on the role – if the role is for an on-campus worker then it would make sense to hold interviews in person and on campus. If the worker is a hybrid or off campus worker then initial interviews can be held virtually via Teams. We do recommend that you meet the preferred candidate, in person, before making an offer of employment to ensure they are the right fit for the role and the University. In some cases, this may involve interviewing face to face away from campus.

For more information visit the [Recruitment](#) intranet page.

How should I induct a new starter?

This again will depend on the role – if the role is for an on-campus worker then it would make sense to induct your new employee in person and on campus. If the employee is a hybrid or off campus employee, the local Induction should still be delivered virtually as a 1-2-1 meeting. It is also a good idea to hold a team meeting via Teams so you can introduce the new employee to colleagues. However, it is recommended that you do meet with the new employee on campus within 2 weeks of starting their employment (in line with Government Covid 19 guidelines) to provide an orientation of the University the workplace and meet with colleagues.

The local induction process should be followed as per normal. Due to Covid restrictions there is an [online University induction](#) covering departments such as HR, Estates, Sports Aston and the Chaplaincy.

Health and Safety

What equipment will we provide to staff who are working dynamically?

The University will provide the relevant IT equipment following the completion of a home working assessment to ensure that their working conditions are appropriate.

For hybrid workers, the University will provide the resources and equipment to support this such as laptop etc as per Digital Services' profile for these workers.

What about staff who have specific DSE requirements?

You will need to check that your existing DSE assessment remains relevant and adjust accordingly. Dynamic working does allow more choice over workstation and location but where specialist equipment is needed due to a health condition, a referral to Occupational Health or other specialist advice may be needed

For more information go to the [Health and Safety](#) intranet page.

The University will not pay towards the cost of broadband, phone, printing or heating bills.

You may be able to claim tax relief for additional household costs if you have to work from home on a regular basis. This includes if you have to work from home due to Covid-19.

You cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home.

Online application link: [P87 Online Claim](#)

For postal application link: [P87 Postal Claim Form](#)

Listening to you

As we embed Dynamic Working, we will gather feedback to understand how this approach has impacted you, your work, and our beneficiaries. We will use a variety of ways to capture this information and everyone will have the chance to contribute.

This feedback can be both elements that are working well and elements that need improvement. This will help us to learn from your experiences of working dynamically.

More information

Go to [Dynamic Working](#) intranet page.