

Toolkit for Leaders – Blended Work Arrangements

This toolkit accompanies RRU's [Blended Work Arrangements \(BWA\) framework](#) as well as the [BWA Request Form](#) and [Home Work Environment Checklist](#). The toolkit is framed around the BWA guiding principles and is intended to support leaders to take a principled approach in determining appropriateness of blended work arrangements.

RRU Guiding Principles for Blended Work Arrangements

Support RRU's vision, values and commitments to enable operational excellence

Blended Work Arrangements will:

- Align with the University's commitment to deliver high-quality, life-changing education and research centered around the student experience and student success in decision making.
- Align with RRU Strategic Priorities including Equity, Diversity, Inclusion; Reconciliation; Student Experience
- Align with our strategic goal to be a workplace of choice
- Utilize a student/clients-centered approach, including examining role requirements and components of work which are essential to be conducted on-campus.
- Ensure service standards, quality of work, productivity and operational requirements are sustained or exceeded.
- Incorporate principles of equity and fairness.

Support leaders and teams

Blended Work Arrangements will:

- Rely on trust, open dialogue and flexibility to create arrangements that embrace inclusivity.
- Require shared accountability by employees and leaders on work expectations, agreement on work output, standards and communication.
- Need shared commitment for maintaining safe and healthy work environments.

Support workplace culture

Blended Work Arrangements will:

- Encourage a vibrant on-campus community experience and support in-person connections with colleagues.
- Protect the potential for creativity, innovation and collaboration.
- Support the University's ability to attract, engage and retain diverse talent.

Support employment obligations

Blended Work Arrangements will:

- Support the safety, health and well-being, both physical and emotional, of employees.
- Examine and implement new ways of working that seek to eliminate historical barriers to inclusion and embrace opportunities to continue to diversify our workforce.
- Be mutually agreed upon by the employee and their respective manager, not to be interpreted as a right of employment.

Benefits and Challenges of Blended Work Arrangements

RRU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was tremendous with faculty, staff and students transitioning to temporary remote work and learning practically overnight. While there have been challenges during this period, there have also been several successes and these successes have provided insights into what the future of work at RRU can be.

While RRU remains focused on teaching, research and learning, reimagining the future of work after the post-pandemic transition presents a unique opportunity. Blended work arrangements (BWA) can be a key element of this new world and align well with university priorities around equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), innovation, as well as with our climate action commitments.

Thinking about the potential benefits and challenges associated with BWA may be helpful for leaders when considering BWA for their own department/schools and assessing how BWA may fit with RRU's overall strategy and department/school level goals. The benefits and challenges presented below reflect both literature (industry and academic) and lived experience at RRU during COVID-19. A summary of these benefits and challenges is provided.

Benefits for Employers

- Directly supports the ability to attract, retain and engage talent who require flexibility in work-life, allowing us to increase or maintain a diversified talent pool.
- Aligns with the university's commitment to equity and inclusion by enabling flexibility and accessibility.
- Allows us to remain competitive in our practices as a top employer, aligning with many large employers who are enabling flexible work locations for their employees.
- Enhances employee engagement and productivity, particularly when the right balance is struck between on site and remote work.
- Potential to positively impact clients service because of more engaged employees.
- Leads to reduced attrition and unscheduled absences (RRU experienced a 31% decrease in sick leave hours in 2020/21 while many employees worked from home during the pandemic).
- Provides opportunities to rethink nature of offices and personal workspaces leading to reduced demand for space and new buildings.
- May enable greater collaboration between department/schools as more flexible workspaces allow department/schools to consider combining their spaces to provide a better user experience.
- Supports the university's ability to quickly pivot and adapt to future emergencies.
- Supports the university to reduce overall climate impact due to decrease in commuting as one example.
- Aligns to our blended learning model and leveraging the same benefits of access.
- Enables more flexibility in part-time work hours without increasing an employee's commute frequency.
- Potential to increase employee response time to inquiries in a distraction-free remote work environment.

Benefits for Employees

- Employees are more engaged, when trusted and empowered with more flexibility to achieve work outcomes.
- Supports employees to better balance work and life demands.
- Personal costs and stress are reduced due to reduced commuting.
- Provides increased flexibility to meet personal commitments while not decreasing service levels, particularly for caregivers.

Potential Challenges for Employers

- Lack of trust. Successful remote work arrangements require collaborative and trusting relationship between the managers and employees.
- May not work for all people or for all roles which could lead to concerns around equity and team department/school as well as jealousy between co-workers.
- Inclusivity challenges may arise with employees who are working remotely being out of sight/out of mind. Inclusion challenges may also arise in meetings when some employees are on-site, and some employees are at home.
- Increased pressures/demands on manager's time. May also require development of new skills to lead and support teams who work in different locations.
- Security concerns particularly around privacy of sensitive information.
- Potential IT infrastructure challenges around security and access to equipment.
- On-boarding and team building with teams spread across multiple locations can be challenging.
- May be more difficult to arrange coverage and backup for positions that provide in-person services, which could negatively impact service levels.

Potential Challenges for Employees

- May result in reduced work-life balance due to blurring of boundaries between work and home.
- Virtual meetings can be cognitively draining (Zoom fatigue).
- Can lead to feelings of isolation with reduced connection to a team and less frequent interaction with colleagues.
- May negatively impact productivity for a variety of reasons including digital distraction and distractions at home.

Potential rewards and risks of the BWA program pilot at RRU

- Attraction and recruitment statistics
- EDI quotient - Accessibility
- Employee engagement and retention
- RRU cultural impact
- Equity and Fairness
- Climate impact
- Productivity and Performance
- Service levels to students and clients
- Benefits utilization
- Potential for reduced sick leave
- Communication
- Psychological impacts ((i.e. decreased morale, isolation, etc.)

- Determining our technical equipment needs for greater mobility
- Space planning and allocation
- Cyber security

Articles for further reading include:

[its-time-for-leaders-to-get-real-about-hybrid.pdf](#)

[5 Questions to Help You Develop Your Remote-Work Policy — for Now \(chronicle.com\)](#)

[Five opportunities to get the most from your institution's remote workforce | EAB](#)

[The future of remote work: An analysis of 2,000 tasks, 800 jobs, and 9 countries | McKinsey](#)

[The Key to Inclusive Leadership \(hbr.org\)](#)

[What Psychological Safety Looks Like in a Hybrid Workplace \(hbr.org\)](#)

[Making the Hybrid Workplace Fair \(hbr.org\)](#)

Assessing Potential for Blended Work Arrangements

In taking a principled approach to assessing potential for BWA, specific considerations, resources and tips are included in this toolkit to support leaders. The toolkit will be refined as we learn through this pilot program and strive to continually improve.

Vision Values and Commitments Considerations:

1. Teaching, Research and Student Experience

Strategic goals, services standards and student experience must be at the forefront when determining feasibility of BWA, ensuring alignment with RRU and departmental/school goals. All administrative and academic support roles serve a purpose. A BWA should only be considered in cases where services/operations can be maintained or enhanced with the introduction of a BWA. Consider the following:

Alignment with strategic goals:

- Check for alignment with strategic goals. Can BWA be designed to help directly achieve goals?
- If a position works remotely in some capacity, what will the impact be (both positive and negative) on achievement of RRU and departmental/school goals?

Student experience and service to students/stakeholders:

- Who does the department/school serve (e.g., students, staff, faculty, business partners, government, industry, funders, etc.)?
- What are the needs of these groups or individuals the department/school serves?
- How does the department/school meet those needs?
- What are the department/school's goals and objectives around service levels?
- What are the potential benefits and challenges of BWA and impact on service levels?
- What does student/clients experience look like for the department/school and how will that be supported?
- How can BWA support goals for accessibility and inclusion?
- What have your students/clients told you about how they prefer to receive service?
- What on-campus service standards must be maintained and to what level?
- What services can best meet needs of students/clients when delivered in person?

- What services can meet needs of students/clients when delivered remotely?
- What services can be enhanced by incorporating a virtual option?
- What services for students/clients need to be coordinated across department/schools or positions to ensure adequate in-person services are in place?

Operational needs and balance of on campus vs. remote:

- What is the nature of work overall for the department/school?
- What is the nature of specific roles within the department/school?
- Who do you need to coordinate with to ensure seamless service delivery across departments/schools?
- Does the manager know the roles well enough to consider BWA?
- Are there special considerations that would require in-person presence? (e.g., orienting new hires, making new on-campus students feel welcome, etc.)
- Are there related, potentially different, considerations for providing support to students /stakeholders who are primarily or exclusively off campus?
- Scheduling: Can a structured blended work arrangement model be implemented where employees work remotely on designated days and are required to be on-campus on certain days?
- Back up coverage for other positions (e.g., vacation, illness, breaks). Are other employees available to cover required on-campus responsibilities on short notice? This will be particularly important for smaller department/schools to ensure student experience and operations aren't negatively impacted by blended work arrangements.
- Collaboration between employees, team and departments: How will effective and productive interactions with employees working on campus and those working remotely be encouraged and supported?
- Workload distribution: Is workload distributed fairly between roles with people working from more than one work location?
- On-boarding and integrating new employees: How will new team members be effectively on-boarded and set up to develop trusting relationships with their manager and colleagues?
- Are processes well documented and accessible from remote work locations?
- What other flexible schedule arrangements may be in place that need to be considered in relation to service standards/on-campus needs?

2. Equity and Inclusion:

RRU is on a journey towards a more inclusive and equitable workplace and is committed to continual growth, action and accountability in its practices and policies. A blended work arrangement presents an opportunity for departments/schools in this regard. An EDI lens is embedded throughout this toolkit and the BWA framework and toolkit are intended to support all and not advantage any group over another.

3. Role Requirements - Tasks/Functions:

The potential to incorporate BWA for a particular position depends on the mix of tasks/functions performed. When assessing the appropriateness of a role for BWA, objectively consider the role and its tasks/functions.

BWA involve employees splitting their time between working on campus and working remotely depending on the tasks they need to perform. Leaders are encouraged to think about role requirements

in terms of which functions are best performed on campus and which may lend themselves well to being performed remotely.

In this assessment, it is important to recognize that although some functions can theoretically be performed remotely, they may be more productively performed on campus. The extent to which a function can productively be performed remotely will depend on a variety of factors and may not be the same from department to department.

Consider the following:

- Can the core job responsibilities can be done independently?
- Are there aspects to the role that can only be done or are better done in person? Does the work have to be done this way? What are the true requirements of the work?
- Is it important for the employee to be physically present on-site to do a task, interact with others, or use location-specific machinery or equipment?
- Physical activities, as well as those that require use of fixed equipment, may not be suited to being performed remotely, such as providing care, operating machinery, using lab equipment, and processing transactions with in-person clients.
- Activities such as information gathering and processing, email communication and analyzing data may lend themselves well to being performed remotely.
- Confidentiality requirements of tasks/functions should be considered as well. Would they best be performed in a closed office space to ensure confidentiality is maintained?
- Is close supervision of tasks required or can the tasks be performed with some level of independence?
- Consider the need for interaction with others and need for collaboration. Although some tasks can be done remotely in a crisis, they may be more effectively done in person. Examples of such functions may include coaching, counselling, and providing advice, building clients and colleague relationships; on-boarding new employees; and various tasks that benefit from collaboration, such as innovation, problem-solving, and creative brainstorming.

Each position at RRU is comprised of various functions/tasks, some of which may be well suited to being performed on-campus where others may be productively performed in a quiet, distraction-free remote work environment. Not all roles can be performed remotely.

It is important to ensure that an employee's remote work environment aligns with the requirements of a task that is to be performed remotely, such as quiet space for concentration or access to required tools. Specific remote workspace considerations are outlined separately.

[McKinsey research](#) may be of interest to leaders in assessing *theoretical* versus *effective*, or *productive*, potential for various tasks/functions. The research spanned 8 countries to analyze “more than 2,000 activities in more than 800 occupations and identify which activities and occupations have the greatest potential for remote work.”

4. Spectrum of Blended Work Possibilities

Baseline Requirement:

In our university environment, we value a vibrant on-campus experience including in-person interactions, collaboration and engagement to fulfill our teaching, research and learning mandate. For

this reason, all roles are expected to work on-campus at least **three days per week**. Note that RRU's BWA framework does not contemplate 100% remote work which would be handled on an exception basis only upon consultation with Human Resources.

Finding the Right Balance:

In assessing potential for blended work, think about the balance between tasks/functions and related suitability to be performed on campus or remotely. What is the right balance for the position given the various tasks/functions of the role?

- How structured will the schedule be?
- Can the employee decide when to be on campus—how self-directed/flexible?
- Is on-campus presence critical with remote work only possible on an ad hoc basis?

Striking the right balance can support desired workplace culture while enabling high levels of productivity and employee engagement. Leaders are strongly encouraged to co-create blended work schedules with individuals and teams seeking harmony between service/operational needs, team needs and personal needs. Taking an inclusive approach, being clear on where there is flexibility and where there is not and giving employees the power to decide where possible will have a positive impact on employee engagement and well-being, supporting a respectful and inclusive work environment.

Leaders may wish to consider other opportunities for flexibility, particularly for roles that will work primarily on campus. Is it possible for some minimal flexibility for the role (e.g. working from home once bi-weekly or monthly)? If employees are seeking flexibility outside of work location, consider other options that may be available via the RRU [Flexible Work Arrangements](#) policy/collective agreements such as modified schedules or job share arrangements.

5. Climate Impact

Transportation accounts for more than half of our community's greenhouse gas emissions (CRD). BWA has potential to reduce our carbon footprint by avoiding GHGs caused by commuting travel. Initial telecommuting research has been conducted by RRU during the early stages of the pandemic (while most of our employees were working remotely). As was the case in many cities and regions across the globe, RRU's research showed a reduced GHG emissions associated with remote work, especially when performed regularly and in conjunction with conserving energy by optimizing building space and heating requirements. There are many variables to consider.

CRD - <https://www.crd.bc.ca/education/climate-action/reducing-greenhouse-gas-emissions/transportation>

Leadership and Culture Considerations:

1. Leading Blended Work Teams

Leading Blended work teams, where employees work a blend and combination of both remote and on-campus locations, requires specific management skills and approaches. The following tips and resources can support managers to lead teams toward thriving, trusting, engaged and productive outcomes.

- **Be aware of implicit bias and emphasize inclusion**

Building a fair and equitable workplace can be challenging when leading teams working in different locations. Participating in Unconscious Bias training (link to HR course) and educating yourself can provide insights into managing these biases. For example: Proximity bias is when one assumes that physically present employees are more productive than those who are working remotely. Incorporating practices to counteract this bias can create a more inclusive and equitable team environment.

- **Trust your team**

Build an environment of trust by mentoring your team while [leading by example](#). Consider allowing employees to hold agency in how they conduct their work and provide clear expectations and autonomy, and give space to team members for implementation and execution. Listen to their advice and recommendations for decisions.

- **Reinforce University and department/school values**

Continue to model [the values](#) and behaviors of the University and department/school. Reinforce these values and behaviours and set team expectations to meet them. Highlight University and departmental priorities and plans frequently – so people understand the [strategic connection](#). Discussing openly that it is not where we work, but rather what we are doing to contribute to RRU priorities which is important. Regardless of our work location, our contribution to RRU priorities remains consistent.

- **Use objectives to create clarity – not processes or activities**

Emphasize objectives ('why') and outcomes ('what') over process ('how') to create greater clarity and drive engagement. Reinforce how all team members' work contributes to strategic and operational objectives and explain 'why'. Pay more attention to what things are successfully accomplished versus how they are accomplished. Clearly define the goals and desired results, then allow employees to develop plans to execute, enhances creativity and ownership.

- **Communicate with teams in multiple ways**

Communicating clear expectations through multiple mediums regardless of work location, reinforces priorities, and helps break barriers to maximizing team effectiveness and engagement. Ask employees how they prefer to connect, be in contact, collaborate and communicate. Optimize technology options within the University, such as email, MS Teams, instant messaging, video conferencing platforms, and the phone. Err on the side of "over communicating" when leading blended work teams. Ensure everyone has a chance to be heard and weigh in.

- **Utilize asynchronous communication methods**

Over communicate with context. Reduce the length of meetings, condense others and eliminate unnecessary ones – don't hold a meeting for the sake of meeting. Ensure all meetings are worthwhile, such as when dialogue is crucial or problem solving is required. Take note whether there is a dominant 'loud voice' while others exhibit a stronger preference for introversion. To promote [psychological safety](#) encourage team members to post comments in text chats, on-line voting and polling.

- **Establish structured and regular check-ins with team members**

These can be a combination of various formats and mediums and should be regular and predictable.

Offer a forum in which each employee knows they can consult with you, and that their concerns and questions will be heard. Set the rules of engagement for the frequency, means, and ideal timing of communication with individuals and teams; and request regular feedback to ensure alignment and continuous improvements. Two-way dialogue provides employees with the information and perspectives they need to do their work, and enables them to express and process emotions, either on campus or virtually. Consider holding regular group ‘huddles’ – 3 minutes to check in on how people feel. Foster an environment where people feel safe, are able to be vulnerable and their authentic self or ask for help.

- **Build your team community**

Community is the social glue that binds teams and organizations together – regardless of physical location. Promote time and space for online and face-to-face socializing. Share a laugh or talk about life outside of work. Have fun and design informal zoom rooms so that people can chat freely as though they were at Habitat or on a walk in the garden! Make unintentional interactions intentional; for example, virtual open-door hours so that all team members can hop on to chat. Cultivate organic information sharing so that communications flow up, down and across whether on campus or remote. Be aware how much time you are spending with on campus team members and those who are remote.

- **Increase recognition**

Effective recognition not only motivates the recipient but serves as a strong signal to other employees of behaviours they should emulate. These can include public acknowledgements, development and learning opportunities, and tokens of appreciation such as a Peacock Award. A key element of any recognition effort is ensuring the recognition is shared in a way that will be comfortable for the recipient. So, by meeting with employees both in-person and virtually you can ask them how they prefer to be recognized and also inquire about what barriers they have overcome or ways peers have helped them, thereby identifying elements to recognize, thank and share the accomplishments of teams and employees beyond your own at RRU.

- **Encourage innovation**

Leaders can emphasize the need and provide opportunities for incremental innovation or process improvements with their teams whether working on or off campus. Highlight the value of employees’ continuing to scale their innovative activities and share across department/schools. Reduce obstacles to new ideas to work differently and better. Embrace the uncharted path forward and encourage all team members’ ideas and inputs.

- **Exhibit empathy**

Demonstrate that you are committed to make blended work arrangements effective for everyone. Allow people to voice how they feel. Hold conversations with colleagues both on campus as well as remote. Support all your employees. Offer encouragement and emotional support through various resources and channels available across the University.

2. Blended Work and Power Dynamics

There are many benefits to blended work arrangements, however, managers should ensure they do not create power differentials within teams that can strain relationships and impact team dynamics and productivity. Those who work more frequently on campus may have more opportunity to be visible, build relationships, demonstrate their competence and ultimately advance their careers. The above tips and

resources will be useful to leaders to take steps to [level the playing field](#) and manage these challenges.

3. On Campus Spaces, Scheduling and Collaboration to Enable Blended Teams

First, recognize that blended work arrangements are new for your team. Although many people worked remotely during the pandemic, a team that is split between on campus and working from home brings unique challenges. How will you build and maintain a strong team that is distributed across multiple locations?

Discuss collaboration needs with your teams and explore ideas on how best to stay connected when everyone isn't working from the same location.

Some ideas include:

- Schedule virtual, optional, drop-in coffee breaks. Can people attend both in person and virtually?
- Take 5 minutes at the start of virtual meetings to talk about anything but work. Use breakout rooms to allow for more confidential conversations.
- Build fun team building activities (lead by various team members) into meetings periodically.
- Bring teams together in person regularly, particularly for topics/discussions that may be sensitive or would benefit from creative problem solving.
- Are there certain day(s) that the team will all come together on campus?
- Find opportunities for your team to collaborate with employees outside of your department/school to build relationships that may not happen as organically for people working remotely. What tools can you make use of to seamlessly collaborate across multiple workspaces?

What has the team learned while working remotely during the pandemic that they would like to carry forward into the future work environment?

Recognizing financial limits, what changes could be made to your workspaces to enable team building and collaboration?

Space constraints may be a challenge for some areas, particularly those with growing teams. Each department/school is encouraged to consider efficient and effective use of space as part of operational decisions to encourage team building and collaboration while working from multiple work locations. Leaders may want to consider blended working opportunities within the context of their own strategic priorities and goals.

4. Setting Expectations for Employees while Working Remotely

The [Blended Work Arrangements Request Form](#) includes important requirements that both employees and managers need to be aware of and abide by. Leaders are expected to discuss with the employee all university requirements along with any department specific requirements to ensure clarity of all expectations prior to beginning a blended work arrangement.

Employee and managers share the responsibility for ensuring an appropriate and ergonomic workspace at home and for effectively utilizing the collaboration technology provided by the university. Discuss requirements with the employee and ensure they have completed the [Home Work Environment Checklist](#). Additional things to keep in mind and discuss with the employee include:

o Team/Role Specific Expectations:

- Managers will need to discuss work schedules with teams and individuals to ensure operational needs are met. An inclusive collaborative approach is recommended.
- Those who work remotely need to maintain contact with those on-campus (and vice-versa). A routine should be established for contact with the manager and co-workers. Employees must be available by phone and email during core hours.
- Employees are expected to keep their manager informed of progress and any difficulties encountered. This contact includes the need for overtime to complete projects.
- Employees who spend time working both on-campus and remotely are expected to plan ahead and obtain as needed from their RRU work department/school the necessary supplies and documents needed for remote work. Additional items may be provided at the discretion of the manager to support remote work, budget permitting and in accordance with department/school processes and RRU policies.
- Discuss any other expectations you may have as well as any questions raised by the employee.

- **Performance Management**

- Working from home should not affect an employee's ability to complete day-to-day functions, including communicating with colleagues, management, students, and so on. Employees must stay updated on department and work events. Employees must keep managers informed on the progress of workload and reach out for support if needed. If an employee's presence is required for a meeting at the worksite, reasonable notice will be provided.
- In some cases, a manager may require the employee to report to the manager in different ways or with a different level of frequency than when the employee is working on campus, to keep the manager up-to-date on the work of an employee who is not on-site every workday. For example, the manager may wish to schedule additional update meetings, have updates provided by email, or implement other schedules and methods of reporting.
- The employee is intended to be actively performing their duties during working hours agreed upon with their managers. However, managers are expected to allow appropriate flexibility for employees who need to schedule their work around childcare, eldercare, or other caregiving obligations arising from the continued impacts of COVID-19 (including closures or cancellations of the normal childcare/eldercare etc. providers). Should other personal obligations arise during working remotely, employees should follow the normal process, in consultation with their manager, they would follow if such obligations arose while the employee was working on University premises.

- **Workspace, Safety and Security Expectations**

Ensure the employee has completed the [Home Work Environment Checklist](#) and discuss key aspects with the employee as well:

- Managers will leverage existing departmental technical resources (software, laptop, desktop, & monitors) for the length of the BWA pilot program. Additional equipment will not be available to facilitate dual workstation setups for campus and remote locations.

- For all BWA arrangements, the employee is responsible for an appropriate and healthy working environment in their remote location including all office arrangements, proper internet connectivity and additional equipment if required.
- Discuss remote workspace needs with the employee. They will need a designated space or room for placement and installation of equipment where it is easy to concentrate - preferably separate from other living areas and away from distractions.
- The remote workspace will be considered an extension of the University's workplace and therefore will be subject to and governed by applicable Workers' Compensation legislation and WorkSafe B.C. Employees will be expected to comply with normal reporting requirements for any work-related accident or injury and to ensure that the designated work space is safe and free from hazards. If the workspace is unsafe and cannot be made safe, RRU may refuse or revoke the employee's work from home arrangement. Employees should ensure that safety while working from home is always the number one priority and are expected to have regard and comply with relevant ergonomic considerations applicable to their workspace.
- The employee working remotely from home must report any injuries or accidents that occur in the course of their employment to their manager as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than 24 hours after such injury/accident. The [Incident Report Form](#) for Employees should be used to make such reports. The employee working remotely from home agrees that a University representative may visit their remote workspace to investigate an injury or accident report and agrees to facilitate such a visit as soon as reasonably possible after the injury or accident.
- A home office should offer the same level of safety and security as the employee would receive at the regular work office. When an employee is working at home, they may be working alone. While working alone in itself is not a risk, it can present a unique situation should something unexpected happen. It is important to keep to a contact schedule even if there are not "work" details to discuss.
- Extended hours in the same body position or repeated motions can lead to various musculoskeletal injuries. Encourage employees to take regular breaks for stretching and movement, whether they are working at home or on campus.
- For remote work, the employees chair or workstation must be adjusted properly: the keyboard is at the right height (wrists are in a neutral position), and the mouse is placed nearby (reachable without arm or wrist strain). For additional ergonomic safety support refer to [RRU guide](#).
- Discuss measures to be put in place to limit confidential and/or private information from being transported to and from campus in hard copy documents or being stored in an unsecured remote work station. RRU materials taken home should be kept in the designated work area at home and not be made accessible to others.
- Ensure staff understand that they are not permitted create or store any RRU related work on their home computer. If the employee does not have an RRU supplied mobile workstation, all remote work must be performed through the RRU remote access infrastructure and create and store all RRU related artifacts within the RRU network. This ensures greatest protection of student, employee and other confidential information.
- Whether an employee is working remotely or on campus, they must be ensuring appropriate and respectful use of email and written documentation. Discuss expectations with employees regarding

appropriateness of discussions, particularly those that are sensitive, taking place via email or instant messaging versus over the phone. When a FOIPOP request is received, every email, no matter how insignificant may be required to be shared as part of the request. An employee's RRU email is not for personal use, it is RRU's property.

5. Employee Suitability

Remote work isn't for everyone. Some employees may prefer to work fully on campus and that should be supported. Entering into BWA is voluntary for employees.

If an employee's performance needs improvement and they require additional performance support, remote work may not be suitable at this time. The leader will make this determination.

A [Performance and Development Plan](#), including goals for the year should be in place to support all employees, including those working on a BWA. Having a Performance Development Plan in place enables both managers and employees to clearly identify tasks and objectives to be completed on campus or during time spent working remotely enabling outcomes to be measured.

6. Support from [Human Resources](#)

Human Resources will support managers in leading blended work teams by providing:

- Coaching and support for managing blended work teams
- Advice and support for assessing viability of blended work arrangements as well as support for review and continuation/ending of blended work arrangements
- Legal accommodation process support and related possibility for BWA.

[Operational Considerations](#)

All employees working remotely from home should familiarize themselves with the [IT Services Information Security Policy Framework](#).

1. Data Security

RRU's IT structure is set-up to support blended work arrangements and mitigate potential risks. IT requirements must be adhered to for any work arrangements, both on and off-campus.

Data security is maintained for both RRU-issued devices and personal devices used to access RRU's network from remote locations. All RRU supplied workstations are configured to utilize a secure access gateway that is seamless to the user. The secure access from RRU equipment should provide the same access and interaction as you would receive while on campus. For personal equipment, the RRU "Remote Access" is a way for faculty and staff to remotely connect to RRU's internal network using a secure (encrypted) and private connection. This service also provides access to RRU systems that are typically inaccessible while working remotely from personal equipment. The remote access service has been upgraded to now include multi-factor authentication (MFA). This new login requirement improves the institution's security posture and will be required to access the Remote Access as well as Outlook Web Access services.

[Microsoft 365](#) hosts data on Canadian servers in compliance with the BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPAA). Supported features for remote access and collaboration include:

- Microsoft OneDrive for secure file hosting and sharing
- MS Teams for collaborating and communicating
- Microsoft SharePoint for additional online collaboration

2. Equipment

The manager is responsible for leveraging existing departmental equipment, software and programs to be used while the employee is working remotely in order to maintain data security and confidentiality. Additional equipment to facilitate remote working will not be readily available during the pilot period and workstation equipment will be refreshed per the existing refresh cycle in place. By the completion of our next technology refresh cycle, all roles in the institution that require technology mobility to effectively perform the duties, will be provided a mobile workstation configuration. Given the timeline to fully refresh the workstation technology, during this BWA pilot, priority will be given to roles that are deemed to require mobility over BWA requests only.

3. Access to Equipment and Tools

- Does the position require access to equipment/software that can only be accessed on campus?
- Consider the degree to which a position is enabled by remote access/availability of required software, systems, tools, files and/or processes.
- Does the role under review require mobility to more effectively fulfill the role responsibilities? Priority will be given to these roles for mobility workstation equipment.
- Will all employees be required to use RRU email, and related systems regardless of work location?
- Does home infrastructure meet requirements for the role (e.g. bandwidth)?

4. Confidentiality

At the University, information that is not public must be treated as confidential – please refer to the University [Confidentiality Policy](#). The University is subject to various requirements regarding privacy and confidentiality that arise out of legislation and policy. All such requirements must be met by the employee working remotely from home in respect of any electronic or hardcopy information or records outside secure University environments or that the employee accesses electronically from offsite.

The employee working remotely must take all reasonable steps to secure and maintain the confidentiality of all University information and documents while they are being transported to and from the employee's off-site workspace, and while the documents are in the off-site workspace. Such steps will include protecting such documents from being damaged, destroyed, stolen, copied or otherwise accessed by unauthorized individuals. University documents that are to be disposed of or destroyed during the employee's work are to be disposed of or destroyed on site at the University.

There may be some documents that the employee working remotely will not be permitted to take out of the departmental office due to privacy/confidentiality concerns.

If a breach of privacy/confidentiality occurs, the employee must inform their manager as soon as

reasonably possible.

Breaches of privacy/confidentiality arising during working remotely from home will be assessed on their individual facts and may result in disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment.

The employee working remotely from home should familiarize themselves with the [IT Services Information Security Policy Framework](#).

All privacy laws in Canada impose requirements on organizations to ensure that the personal information that they collect, use and share is secure against unauthorized access, use and disclosure.

Planning to move any members of your workforce online must include appropriate consideration for legal privacy and data security obligations.

5. Travel

Blended work arrangements should be organized to avoid travel back and forth in one day between campus and remote work location. RRU will not incur additional expenses for work-related travel because of the employee's remote work location. If an employee is scheduled for an on-campus workday or directed to report to campus, the University is not responsible for expenses related to attending campus such as mileage, transportation costs, parking, gas and commute time.

6. Legal Aspects

BWA requirements and obligations of managers and employees are embedded throughout this toolkit and are specifically outlined in the [Blended Work Arrangements Request Form \(link\)](#). Determinations for BWA must include an assessment of risk and related legal implications.

o Policies and Collective Agreements

Nothing in the Blended work arrangements framework, forms or toolkit limit or amends the provisions of agreements entered into by the University and its employee groups.

o WorkSafe

The employee's remote workspace will be considered an extension of the on-campus workspace. Therefore, RRU is liable for job-related injuries or illnesses that occur in the employee's remote workspace during the employee's agreed upon working hours. The employee's at-home work hours will conform to a schedule agreed upon by the employee and his or her manager. If such a schedule has not been agreed upon, the employee's work hours will be assumed to be the same as before the employee began remote working. The university assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the employee's remote workspace outside the agreed-upon work hours. The university is not liable for loss, destruction, or injury that may occur in or to the employee's home. This includes family members, visitors, or others that may become injured within or around the employee's home.

o Workplace Accommodation

Blended work arrangements may be considered on a case by case basis and informed by RRU's accommodation processes and human rights legislation for qualified employees. Employees with existing pre-documented medical accommodations to work from home will not be impacted by this BWA pilot program.

If an employee requires ergonomic equipment as part of a workplace accommodation, one location will need to be identified as the primary work location and it will be outfitted with the required equipment.

- **Privacy**

Managers and employees must ensure ongoing compliance with provincial and federal legislation, regardless of whether an employee is working on-campus or remotely.