

Work(place) Evolution

Hybrid Work & Communication Toolkit

Guide for Hybrid Work & Communication



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Faculty of Medicine

Contents

<hr/> What is in the Guide	03
How to use the Guide to support your team	
<hr/> Define	04
Define how your team will work and communicate	
<hr/> Communicate	07
Communicate your needs and preferences	
<hr/> Evolve	10
Evolve how you work over time	
<hr/> Appendix	11
UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines	

How to use the Guide for Hybrid Work & Communication

What is in the Guide

This Guide offers considerations for you to revisit the way you, your team, and your colleagues work and to take a more deliberate approach to work in this new hybrid environment.

This Guide outlines three categories of actions to consider as you cultivate successful hybrid work and communication. This Guide is meant to serve as an ongoing resource as contexts evolve, and we hope it will inform how you work both as a leader and a collaborator.

We encourage managers to review this guide ahead of a conversation with your team. This will enable you to make decisions about any elements of your team's hybrid work that have already been decided by you or others, and will help you prepare for more generative conversations with your team on the elements that are flexible and open to team input and discussion.

It is not expected that you will know the answers to all the questions in the Guide. The Guide is meant to be a starting point; you can work with your team during the Team Norms Discussion and using the Team Norms Checklist to collaboratively arrive at answers to questions and check-in on assumptions.

If you lead a highly distributed team, or your team is comprised of employees from different institutions, you may need to approach the considerations offered in this Guide a bit differently. However, unique team structures or compositions do not preclude the usefulness of these tools. We encourage you to explore the opportunities these tools offer no matter how your team is structured. We believe these tools have something to offer to all teams.

The insights in this guide are organized into three categories of actions

1. Define

Hybrid work succeeds when teams define how to work and communicate.

Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.

2. Communicate

Hybrid work succeeds when teams communicate their needs and preferences.

Proactively communicate needs, expectations, and limitations with your team.

3. Evolve

Hybrid work succeeds when teams evolve how they work over time.

Enable experimentation and establish a clear understanding of what stays and what goes.

If you have questions, concerns, or feedback about this Toolkit or about any of the information and materials we have provided, please contact FoM.OrgDev@ubc.ca.

Action 1: Define

Key Considerations

Hybrid work succeeds when teams define how to work and communicate.

Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.

Define how you will use remote and in-office locations for different work activities

Consider

- What different kinds of work do the people on your team do?
- Where would they be most effective when doing that work?
- Is it valuable for you or your team to know when each of you is in the office or working remotely on a given day?

Define

- Where will you:
 - Do quiet, focused work?
 - Collaborate and brainstorm?
 - Hold quick check-ins?
 - Hold more formal team meetings?
 - Socialize?
 - Hold team celebrations?
- How will your team signal where they are working and how they can be reached? Setting your status in MS Teams or creating a shared team calendar are simple ways to do this.

Define how you'll prioritize your time when on-site

Consider

- What makes on-site work meaningful and engaging for you and your team?
- Frameworks like [Activity-Based Working \(ABW\)](#). ABW is when the work week is characterized not by time (e.g. days in a week) but by the activities taking place (e.g. focus work, collaboration, etc.).

Define

- What factors will you and your team take into consideration when deciding how to spend your time when you are on-site together? You could start by highlighting elements of UBC Guidelines for your team based on what is important for them to succeed.
- What activities make in person work the most engaging and effective, and how can you encourage and prioritize those when on-site?

Action 1: Define

Key Considerations

Hybrid work succeeds when teams define how to work and communicate.

Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.

Define how you'll decide which meetings should be in person vs. hybrid vs. fully remote

Consider

- What is the purpose of the meeting? The main activity(s) of the meeting can be used to signal whether a meeting should be in person, hybrid, or remote.
- Does a specific format of meeting help support inclusivity? For example, fully remote meetings have been felt to level the perceived power dynamic between colleagues in Vancouver and colleagues in distributed sites.
- How can you use meetings to build team cohesion and culture? Predictable in person team meetings can be useful in this regard. The cadence will depend on what makes sense for your team and on what you want to achieve (e.g. check-ins vs. strategic planning). *[If your team is highly distributed this may not be relevant.]*

Define

- How will you use the meeting purpose (e.g. working session, brainstorming, presentations, and one-on-ones) to define the format of a meeting?

Define your preferred communication channels

Consider

- What types of communication do you have with your team? How do you want to use different types of communication for different activities? For example, do you want to check-in about day-to-day tasks in a different place or a different way than you might share photos from a recent vacation?
- Communication platforms are vital tools for hybrid work, but not everyone will be comfortable or experienced with each of them. How do you plan to onboard and train your team on how to make the most of these platforms?

Define

- Which communication platforms will you and/or your team use for casual, informal, business, and urgent needs?

Action 1: Define

Key Considerations

Hybrid work succeeds when teams define how to work and communicate.

Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.

Define how many days a week your team is expected to be in office

The parameters

- UBC has been clear that 100% remote work arrangements will not be considered at this time.
- At minimum, all Faculty of Medicine employees are required to be on campus 20% of the time. This could be 1 day per week, 1 week per month, or another schedule that meets operational needs.

Consider

- Think about the questions that came in earlier sections of the Guide. What operational needs have they identified in terms of where and when your team will be most effective when doing their work?
- Review the UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines (see Appendix P10-13). These guidelines pose considerations such as whether a role is student-facing, whether it has an on-site function of supporting culture and other work effectiveness matters.

- Consider the job functions on your team and organizational needs and culture, team dynamics, personal preferences, and wellbeing. Beyond work effectiveness, consider the inclusivity benefits that come from flexibility in work location.
- As you identify job functions and requirements, consider each individual employee and the team as a whole:
 - How much time do they spend working alone, in a team, with students, or with others in or outside of the organization?
 - Do they have the tools and resources they need to perform their job well and securely when working remotely?
 - Who do they need to collaborate with and would benefit from being in the office with? How can your team arrangements be designed to facilitate this interaction and collaboration?

Define

- How many days a week your team is expected to be in office?
- This exercise could happen collaboratively as a team or independently as a manager. Once you've defined the priorities for your team, be prepared to articulate them. The **Team Norms Discussion** can be a useful tool for this.

Action 2: Communicate

Key Considerations

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams communicate their needs and preferences.
Proactively communicate needs, expectations, and limitations with your team.*

Communicate your team norms when onboarding new team members

Consider

- How are you going to communicate team norms to new team members?
- How will you integrate new team members into your shared norms? Will you revisit your norms as a group if new people join your team?

Communicate

- Will part of your onboarding process for new team members include asking the whole team to come on-site for the first day or first week of a new team member? Meeting coworkers in person gives the new team member an opportunity to experience the intangible aspects of work, not codified in a manual: the team culture.
- How you will share the Team Norms Checklist with new team members during their onboarding process.
- When will you host a new Team Norms Discussion? For example, it may be appropriate if several new team members are joining at once, or if your team has had some turnover since the last time you hosted the Discussion.

Communicate your working hours and how you'll protect your focus time

Consider

- How will your team set boundaries around their time and define expectations for responsiveness?
- The multitude of communication platforms can become a distraction to getting work done. Consider how the team could signal focus time or when they do not want to be disturbed by messages or emails.

Communicate

- How do you want your team to communicate their working hours and set boundaries around when they can expect to be reachable?
 - Updating your MS Teams status to indicate your hours of work is a simple way to set boundaries and create expectations for reply time.
 - Use the 'Do Not Disturb' status on MS Teams to minimize distractions.
 - Schedule 'Focus Time' or 'Ask before scheduling' on your calendar as a way to reduce meeting load.
 - Help others maintain their work boundaries by clearly indicating in emails and other communications whether something is urgent or not.

Action 2: Communicate

Key Considerations

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams communicate their needs and preferences.
Proactively communicate needs, expectations, and limitations with your team.*

Communicate your team's meeting 'hygiene'

Consider

- Is your team suffering from meeting fatigue? Ask yourself whether a meeting is necessary. Sometimes an email, MS Teams message, or an in person chat is sufficient.
- How can you build wellness considerations into your meeting norms? This could include accommodating commutes and daily schedules and ensuring there is enough time between meetings to eat and use the washroom.
- How can you enable and facilitate focus and efficient use of time during meetings?
- What norms you will set around meeting participation? You could:
 - Discourage multi-tasking in hybrid or remote meetings
 - Ask for cameras to be left on
 - Establish an expectation that people will not check emails during meetings.

Communicate

- What norms and expectations you will set for your meetings, such as:
 - What activities require a meeting? Can some activities be done another way to minimize back-to-back meetings?
 - Building time for breaks and to reset between meetings by setting your calendar to automatically start meetings 5 or 10 min after the hour, or end 5 or 10 min before the hour.
 - Honour the time you have set aside and ensure meetings start and end on time.

Action 2: Communicate

Key Considerations

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams communicate their needs and preferences.
Proactively communicate needs, expectations, and limitations with your team.*

Communicate how you want your team to make the most of the time you share in person together

Consider

- How can you use your time in the office together to build team culture and relationships?

Communicate

- What in person activities you would like your team to engage when they are in person together:
 - Do you aspire to have in person days be as meeting-free as possible?
 - Do you want to make time to eat lunch together or go for a walk?
 - Consider walking meetings if booking a room or being in front of a computer is not necessary.
- How are you going to enable more interaction with your team while you're on-site. For example, let your team know your office door will be open or schedule 'drop in' time in a shared team calendar.

Communicate the incentives and rewards for embodying the preferred team norms

Consider

- Just because norms are established, that does not mean the culture will automatically follow. How will you facilitate, enable, and encourage your team to adopt the new, preferred behaviours?

Communicate

- How will you reinforce and facilitate adoption of new norms and behaviours?
 - How will you set the tone and lead by example to reinforce team norms?
 - How will you ensure your team has access to and time to do training to make best use of the available tools?
 - What are your expectations for how you want your team to behave and work together?
 - How can you give kudos or otherwise acknowledge your team's efforts to follow the 'ground rules' you have set to reward adoption of new norms?
 - How are you going to link the new behaviours you want to see with how you evaluate employee performance as a way to encourage adoption of new norms?

Action 3: Evolve

Key Considerations

Hybrid work succeeds when teams evolve how they work over time.

Enable experimentation and establish a clear understanding of what stays and what goes.

Evolve your team norms

Consider

- How frequently will you revisit team norms?

Evolve

- Times of team flux, such as when you onboard new team members, is a good time to revisit your team norms as a group. This can support the onboarding of the new team members and serve to build culture within your team.

Evolve when and how you check-in on what's working for your team

Consider

- Do you have feedback mechanisms that enable your team to share honest feedback? Is it accessible to everyone, from junior to senior staff?

Evolve

- Create opportunities for your team to provide feedback on your team norms. Deliberately make time in a meeting every six months or once a year to check in and review.
- Change can happen unexpectedly, so remain open to constructive feedback throughout the year.

Evolve how you work through experimentation

Consider

- How can you be open to new ideas and approaches you can try with your team?
- How will you know if you are feeling stuck or if the norms you have agreed upon aren't sticking?

Evolve

- Openly invite and be curious to new ideas about different ways of working, collaborating, and connecting from your team.
- Talk to your colleagues and learn what they are doing and how they have put the Hybrid Work & Communication Toolkit into action. Are there any ideas you could draw from them?
- How can team members recommend new tools or processes to try?
- How long will you test new tools before deciding to integrate or leave them? Who will be involved in making that decision?

UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines

June 2021

This Guide has been developed in alignment with UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines, provided below as a resource. You can review the current version on UBC's website here: [UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines](#).

Objectives

The objectives of the hybrid work program are to:

1. Attract and retain staff by creating a more flexible workplace environment.
2. Positively impact student experience and outcomes through flexibility and the use of technology.
3. Optimize service levels, work quality, and productivity through flexibility and the use of technology.
4. Reduce carbon emissions through lower levels of commuting and strain on campus facilities.
5. Catalyze collaboration between UBC and its partners through normalizing remote interactions.
6. Promote and enable connections and balance across UBC campuses.

Principles

1. Prioritize the physical and mental health of students, faculty, and staff.
2. Promote the academic mission of the university, respecting faculty commitments to research, teaching, and service.
3. Centre around student experience and outcomes.
4. Respect and reflect the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
5. Sustain or improve service levels, quality of work, and productivity.
6. Protect culture, team dynamics, and the potential for creativity, innovation, and collaboration.
7. Maintain the vibrancy of our campuses and learning sites.
8. Optimize space utilization and consider financial sustainability.
9. Uphold the autonomy of units and teams in determining their work arrangements in alignment with the guidelines and other principles of the program.
10. Support an institutional approach and consistency in application, maintaining agility to pivot if and as required.

UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines

June 2021

This Guide has been developed in alignment with UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines, provided below as a resource. You can review the current version on UBC's website here: [UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines](#).

Guidelines

- Faculty and staff are employed as campus-based employees, with hybrid work arrangements established based on agreement between the employee and the university.
- Full-time permanent remote work will not be considered at this stage of the program.
- Employees normally provided with equipment by the university and approved for hybrid work will be provided with the appropriate technology solution to perform their jobs effectively and securely.
- Staff working remotely ensure and attest that the conditions are in place for them to work productively, safely, and securely, including space and bandwidth.
- Deans, Vice-Presidents (VPs), and Associate Vice-Presidents (AVPs) are responsible for decisions made in respect of hybrid work for staff within their respective faculties and units. These responsibilities may be delegated to supervisors.
- Where face-to-face interaction or physical presence is critical to the workplace experience, the Dean, VP, or AVP may decide that hybrid work arrangements are not suitable.
- Considerations informing determination of staff and unit work arrangements include the need for or benefit from physical proximity to campus or others, in person collaboration, or access to specialized facilities, as well as the service and engagement expectations of others.
- Hybrid work arrangements are approved on a case-by-case basis, and do not replace or eliminate the requirement for regular, in person attendance. Staff approved for hybrid work understand they may be required to attend the workplace at any given time at their own expense.
- Hybrid work arrangements can be an attraction and retention tool, especially in cases aligned with the principles of accessibility, equity, diversity, or inclusion.
- Hybrid work arrangements can be reversed or amended, with appropriate notice and approvals, at the request of the employee or the university.

UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines

June 2021

Guidelines - Continued

- Except as expressly agreed, hybrid work does not change the terms and conditions of employment as set out in the employment agreement, and those terms and conditions will continue to apply.
- Hybrid work does not apply to every position at the university as it is not suitable for certain roles or work performed. If some employees on a team are working in a hybrid arrangement and others are not, it is important to consider the impact that will have on team dynamics.
- Where at least some team members are working in a hybrid arrangement, consideration should be given to intentional scheduling and use of on-campus time to support productivity, collaboration, workplace experience, and safety.
- Managers should consider the work arrangements of their team members when determining their own arrangements to ensure appropriate on-campus support, engagement, and accessibility.
- Remote and on-campus work are subject to the same regulatory and statutory obligations. Work that would normally be performed on campus within British Columbia (BC) must continue to be performed at a location within the province. Work that would normally be performed outside of BC as a job requirement (such as research, field work, instruction, or study or administrative leave) is not subject to this restriction.
- The university will act in accordance with its collective agreements, working in partnership with AAPS and unions, and in accordance with the Human Rights Code.
- The university must be able to defend its decisions using the criteria arising from labour law: reasonable, operationally justified, not arbitrary, and not discriminatory.

UBC's Hybrid Work Guidelines

June 2021

Considerations

- Do the operational requirements of the role require it to be on campus?
- Is this role required to be on campus to support the student experience, research, or scholarly activity?
- Does the role require or benefit from an on-campus presence to be completed?
- Does the role require close physical proximity to others to be completed?
- Does the role require or benefit from face-to-face interaction?
- Does the role need access to research facilities that require it to be on-site?
- Does the role require access to specialized on-campus facilities or equipment?
- Is this role required to be or benefit from being on campus to support culture, teamwork, and employee engagement?
- Is there physical space for the role to be done on-campus?
- Will a hybrid work arrangement result in increased financial costs?
- Can the employee attest to the requirements for safe and secure hybrid work?
- Have the safety requirements per WorkSafeBC (WSBC) been implemented?
- More information to support decision-making is available on the Hybrid Work for Leaders page.